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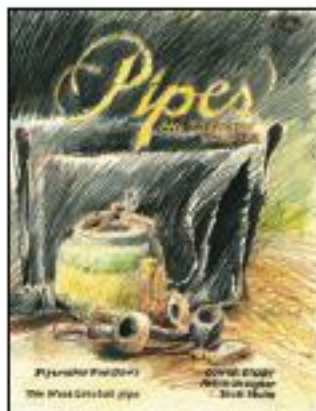
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1 POUND



REGULAR FEATURES

- 4 EDITOR'S DESK
- 6 PIPE LINES
- 29 PIPEFULS
- 49 TRIAL BY FIRE
- 54 EVENTS
- 54 ADVERTISING INDEX
- 55 PRIME RETAILERS
- 56 PARTING SHOTS



9 In pursuit of philosophical design

It took a few years for Scott Stultz to find the best ways to utilize his design and drawing talents, but the results of that learning process are spectacular.

16 Quiet elegance

Rad Davis achieves elegance in simplicity.

22 *The Perfect Smoke*

Fred Hannah answers questions regarding his new book, *The Perfect Smoke*.

24 Collectible "smoake"

H.M. Caldwell Co. was a leading publisher of literature regarding smoking in the early 20th century.

32 The pleasures of pipes

Peter Heeschen is grateful for all that pipemaking has given to him.

38 Fare thee well, sweet Anna Liffey

Faced with a round of firings at the newspaper where he works, pipe smoking columnist Jack Dupont realizes that time has passed him by.

44 Pipe revival

Being so good at what he does keeps Tim West busy repairing pipes.

ON THE COVER

Original artwork by artist/designer Scott Stultz



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A heroic quest

Recently I visited a friend in the hospital. He was having brain surgery (he came out fine, except he now claims not to recognize me—which I think is pure opportunism on his part) and was expected to be in the operating room four or five hours. I knew I'd want a pipe or two while waiting, so I'd parked in a remote corner of the parking lot as far from buildings as I could get.

A *Dr. Phil* marathon on the waiting room's TV was sapping everyone's life force and IQ, driving me from the building and out to my car to smoke and read in peace. Soon, though, there was a tap on my window by a hand motioning me to get out. When I opened the door, smoke engulfed the hospital security guard standing there, who said, "You can't smoke here."

"Really?" I said. "I can't see that I'm bothering anyone."

"It's a hospital. There are sick people here who shouldn't be exposed."

I pointed to the main building 300 yards away. "The sick people are in there."

"But they have to park here," he said, even though the nearest other parked car was 20 spaces away. "And look at this smoke."

"The smoke was inside the car with me until you insisted we come out."

It was counterproductive argumentation. Now I was just making him mad. "There's a \$100 fine for smoking anywhere on hospital grounds," he said.

"If I pay it now will you leave me alone?"

"Sir, it's not a *license* to smoke, it's a *fine*—for every single infraction. And I'll be watching."

So I slunk back to the main building and loitered around the lobby until the guard disappeared, then I started back to my car. But over my shoulder I saw him following about 30 yards behind, so I opened my trunk and pretended to examine the spare tire, then turned and walked back. The guard nodded as we passed.

The next time I tried a different route. I squeezed between two dumpsters overflowing with biohazardous waste and commando-crawled through a long, insidious row of thorn bushes housing a large family of irritable raccoons to emerge surreptitiously on the far side of my car. As I staggered from the underbrush in ragged triumph, the guard was standing there. "I can see," I said, "that you've dealt with people like me before."

"Just doing my job, sir."

So I started prowling around the perimeter of the hospital. Finally I found some construction and climbed over a pile of broken concrete to find a solid wooden fence, which I crawled under through oily mud to find exactly what I hoped. It was a small outside patio. The nearest sidewalk was 20 feet away on the other side of some construction barriers. The only reasonable access seemed to be one small, unmarked door to the hospital. Safe and content at last, I started loading my pipe.

As I was about to light up, the security guard appeared on the sidewalk (I'll never know how he kept doing that). Before he could speak, though, a doctor came out the door and lit a cigarette under the no-smoking sign. Then another doctor appeared and did the same. My security guard was apoplectic. He wasn't about to tell the doctors they couldn't smoke, so he couldn't confront me.

I had won, and victory was sweet. I winked at the guard and arrogantly flicked my lighter. But I was interrupted by my ringing phone. "He's out of surgery," said my friend's wife. "Oh," I said. "Good." I gazed longingly at my unlit pipe, then sighed and reached for the door. The guard was smiling broadly.

"You can't go in that way," said one of the doctors. "It's a restricted area."

"Of course it is," I said. I pocketed my pipe, tucked in my shirt, crouched down in the mud and squeezed back under the fence. And the guard was there to help me up on the other side.

Chuck

Pipes

AND TOBACCO

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P&T Readers RESPOND

Improving with experience

I have been a pipe smoker for 56 years. I was a charter subscriber to your excellent magazine, and I have saved every issue from the very first to the latest. I find it to be a superb reference on everything that pertains to (pardon the expression) pipes and tobaccos. Indeed, you were kind enough to print a letter of mine in your second issue.



I am enclosing a few pictures of what I call my "smoking room." Many of the pipes are older than I am, since I inherited them from my father. I still have the first pipe I ever bought, while I was in college in New York. I got it at a newsstand in my neighborhood, and I still smoke it occasionally. Then I started learning and graduated to such things as Dunhill, Charatan and Barling. I have a pre-transition Barling that my sister gave to my father in 1951. I bought two Charatans in London in 1953 (for the equivalent of \$15 each) and in '64 I picked up a Pipe Dan, as it was then, in Copenhagen.

More recently I have acquired Petersons, Kriswells, Upshalls and Ferndowns. The lesson here is that new smokers, with a little persistence, will learn to go on to better things from their first drugstore purchases.

I sincerely hope that your magazine will continue for many more years. I will subscribe for as many years as possible. Thank you very much for a fine publication.

Donald Fairhurst
Severna Park, Maryland

Story requests

I recently came across two articles about pipe shops and pipemakers. One is about Barclay Rex in New York City that appeared in *Robb Report*, and the other is from the current issue of *Forbes* magazine's *ForbesLife* covering a shop called J.M. Boswell in Chambersburg, Pa.

I have been a subscriber to your magazine for some time and I don't recall you ever featuring either of these shops in your magazine—maybe you could feature them in the future.

Thanks for your fine work. I just purchased an Ashton Root XXX Sovereign with a silver 2000 Millennia band, and it is a great pipe. Mr. Taylor knew what he was doing.

Ron Peters
Watseka, Illinois

P&T: In one of our first issues (Fall 1996), we featured a story titled "Keystone Pipemakers," in which J.M. Boswell appeared. However, full-length feature stories on J.M. Boswell's pipe-making, tobaccos and pipe shop, as well as a feature on Barclay Rex in New York, definitely merit appearances in future issues.



Big sale

The last Charatan seven-day Crown Achievement pipe set ever produced was recently sold for \$28,000.

Payless Pipes' Bob Winston attended an industry dinner in 1975 and sat at the table with Colonel Ken Barnes, Charatan's managing director. In conversation, Winston told Barnes that he would like to purchase a seven-day set. Barnes told him that Charatan didn't have one at the moment but that he would contact Winston when one was produced. Winston bought the seven-day set in the fall of 1976.

The sale price was \$28,000, which may be the highest pipe sale in history. The buyer is a 31-year-old antique dealer living in North Carolina who wishes to remain anonymous.

Tobacco search

I'm 54 years old and disabled. I've been a pipe smoker for 37 years and it's a pastime that I truly love and I really enjoy your magazine.

Luckily, in my 37 years of pipesmoking, I've been able to collect more than 100 pipes. This is good as it is getting harder to find pipes and good tobaccos without driving vast distances.

My father had a blend that he had made up at the Briar Works in Knoxville, Tenn. Sadly, the store is now closed. The blend consists of equal parts of Lane 1-Q, Lane BCA, Peter Stokkebye B&B and Milton Sherman's #703 Blend A.

Can anyone out there in Pipe Land help me?

Fred R. Binning
Hamilton, Indiana

P&T: Lane and Peter Stokkebye tobaccos are readily available at many premium tobacco shops or online. You should be able to order them and have them shipped to you. Milton Sherman's #703 Blend A is unfamiliar to us. If anyone has any infor-

mation on how it may be obtained, please let us know and we'll forward the information to Mr. Binning.

Birthday surprise

For my 32nd birthday, I received two very cool gifts from my wife and kids. One gift was the 2012 Peterson St. Patrick's Day Pipe #999, which is beautiful. The other gift was a cake: not just any cake but a replica of a Peterson pipe! It was awesome!

Jason Seleyman
Cyberspace



Pipe literature abounds

This is a banner year, of sorts, for our hobby, particularly for pipe people who are also book people, or book people who may also be pipe people! In the near-distant past, books written for our community of smokers and collectors arrived

in unpredictable spurts, but 2012 offers ample evidence of a new wave of interest in literature on the part of both writers and readers.

Looking back in time, a handful of relevant treatises may have flown under our collective radar, especially those recently printed by and advertised only on Lulu.com: Charles Hester, *My Pipes and Me and My Love, My Pipe*; Roland Caldwell Sr., *On The Pleasures and Enjoyment Of Pipe Smoking*; Walter Wade Elliott, *Pipe Smoking 101. A Guide For the New Pipe Smoker*; and Ira Lapides, *The Gallinburler 30th Anniversary [sic] Book of Knowledge & Learning—A Tobacco Memoir*.

This year, it's gangbusters so far, and here's the proof. Debuting at the Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club annual convention in May were these new releases: Fred Hanna, *The Perfect Smoke. Gourmet Pipe Smoking for Relaxation and Reflection*; Jan Andersson, *Scandinavian Pipemakers*; Mark Irwin, *Pipe Smoking in Middle Earth*; and Rick Newcombe, *Still Searching for Pipe Dreams*.

What's on the near-horizon? There's tentative talk of a future book from Neill

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Archer Roan, *A Passion for Pipes, Chasing the Pipe and Tobacco Muse*. The *Peterson Pipe Chronicles* is in development. Elliott Nachwalter and I recently corresponded about his late 1980s manuscript, co-authored by Fred Poole, *The Pipemaker's Book: A Step-by-Step Guide to Making and Appreciating Fine Pipes*. In May, he volunteered via email: "... I have recently reconnected with Fred, and we discussed the possibility of self-publishing the book ..." According to his website, The Briar Gallery, Thomas Looker is contemplating documenting his encounters with various pipemakers around the globe. A close friend, Wolfgang Cremer, will soon offer the collecting public the first volume of a two-volume set of illustrated books on antique pipes. Earlier this year, Greg Pease's calendar, *In Celebration of Briar-2012*, was released, and in May, a new online magazine, *Pipe Smoker Unleashed*, was launched. Other written contributions about which I know nothing may be in the planning stage or under way as I write this.

Does it get any better than this? For all of us who enjoy a good read, for those

who want to gain from the insights, opinions, views and innermost thoughts about this arcane hobby from those in the know—pity the many non- and anti-smokers who do not understand what turns us on—my answer is three words from President George W. Bush's July 3, 2003, speech: "... bring 'em on!"

Ben Rapaport
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Calling all pipemakers

In May 2011, we launched a Facebook site that showcases antique tobacco pipes in all mediums (www.facebook.com/tobacpipeartistory). To complement this album, soon thereafter, a companion blog (<http://tobacpipeartistory.blogspot.com>) was created that offers additional pipe images and their history. We encourage you to access both sites to view what we have achieved to date.

One year later, in May 2012, we decided that it is fitting and timely to add another Facebook album dedicated solely and wholly to the unique craftsmanship and stunning skills exhibited by

so many talented pipemakers around the globe. We seek to present the "very best of breed," those briars that are uniquely crafted, those that exhibit the extraordinary efforts of diligent artisans and artists who devote their time, energy and creativity to produce them.

We invite all who believe that their workmanship should be featured on the World Wide Web. Please contact either of us if you desire to participate in this endeavor. Our purpose is to promote your handiwork to the world; as the agents of so many innovative and imaginative changes in styles, materials and effects used in the fabrication of contemporary briar pipes, you deserve to be recognized and lauded. It is a free service! Space on our site is limited, so we are obliged to vet all submissions. Our requirements regarding images and the accompanying text are few—we'll specify them in a follow-on email to each maker—and we believe that the benefits to you may be many. Welcome aboard!

Daniel Beck (dbartistory@yahoo.com)
Ben Rapaport (ben70gray@gmail.com)



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In pursuit of philosophical design

Scott Stultz spent years finding the right ways to express his artistic vision

The quality of the art is unmistakable. Imbued with an energy that attracts and holds the eye, it engages the viewer as a collaborator of meaning. Some pieces seem pastoral, and indeed are in that the images emanate pure relaxation, but the style vibrates with a subliminal, harmonic connection between subject and audience. What you see here are images of pipes; they seem simple enough, but simplicity is duplicitous. There's more happening here than simple pencil renderings of simple objects. And if you think Scott Stultz's drawings are evocative, you should see his furniture.

This kind of elegant minimalism doesn't materialize without an impressive confluence of talent, experience and circumstance. Indeed, Stultz's many early attempts at harnessing his talent in various directions were, unbeknownst to him at the time, futile for his immediate purpose but essential to his evolution as an artist. Stultz's past hardened his stubborn adherence to his artistic vision, tempered his sometimes misguided determination to force his artistic peg into a mismatched hole and focused his talents toward an inevitable future in which art and design would permeate his entire existence.

At first the journey seemed effortless. "Without a whole lot of effort I did well from high school," says Stultz. "My dad wanted me to do something like be a surgeon. But I wasn't interested in medicine and I wanted to be passionate about what I did." It became quickly evident that art

would be his passion, and he accepted a scholarship at Rochester Institute of Technology in upstate New York.

"I was going to be a fine artist," he says. "I was going to be a printmaker. When I was a kid, from the time I was about 12, I spent a lot of time with sketch books doing drawings, and once I got reasonably good at it, doing drawings for money, I thought, boy, I'd like to be a printmaker because I love etchings and lithographs." But when it was time to declare a major concentration, he found himself gravitating to industrial design. "I thought, wow, industrial design, what a wonderful way to influence the world."

The prospect excited him, so that's what he majored in.

"But in a lot of ways I wasn't terribly good at it," he says. "I don't love the stereotype, but I kind of fit it. I have an uneven artistic temperament. If I'm impassioned with something I'll put more time and effort into it than most of my peers would. If I didn't have the passion I couldn't even make myself do it."

After four years he dropped out of school. "I felt like a failure and felt pretty bad about myself." He went to work for a company that had a side business in custom kitchen design. "I didn't know anything about that and I thought, oh





man, I'm gonna be a kitchen designer when I should be in New York City working for some really cool industrial design firm. But I needed money and I needed to live, so I took the job."

He was 22 years old and knew nothing about kitchen design or about business. "I didn't even know what an invoice was." Before he could find out, his supervisor was fired and Stultz was asked by the owners to try designing kitchens on his own. "I worked hard at it and got to be a high-end custom kitchen designer. I liked the work, but I'd thought my aspirations were taking me in a different direction."

The company he was working for found itself in debt and the owners wanted out. They offered Stultz ownership if he would also accept the debts. Still knowing nothing about business, he found a partner to help and accepted the owners' proposal. "What I didn't understand was the extent of that debt, but my partner and I worked really hard for about five years, got the business out of the hole, started making a little money and during that period I became more and more convinced that what I wanted to do was become an architect." And the place for that education, he decided, was Cornell University.

To pay for that, he'd need a new and better source of income. He started transitioning the current business into the hands of his partner and building a new business. "I'd been a big fan of architect-designed furniture ever since I took a furniture design course. I hunted down the furniture I loved the most, and I got together a group of investors and promised to triple their money over a period of three years. We found a beautiful space in a historic building in downtown Rochester. I designed a showroom, which was tremendous fun because I had to figure out how to make it look like a million bucks without spending a





lot of money. We filled it up with mostly European-manufactured, very high-end furniture, lighting and interior design accessories, and opened up to a lot of fanfare. Newspapers were there, TV news was there, we had a black-tie grand-opening event and coming right out of the chute we really did well.

"Similarly to my experience in college, I had a huge amount of passion for the things I really wanted to do. But I had no patience at all for being a shopkeeper, for doing accounting, all the stuff that you really need to have someone do if you're going to run a successful business. I had a partner, but it soon became clear that we were not going to get along. It got bad and I just didn't have the stomach for a fight; I agreed that if she would pay off all the investors, I'd just let her have the business. It was really unfortunate, ugly and painful. At the same time, my first marriage was also coming to an end. I got out of this thing honorably, and I had almost nothing."

He still wanted to go to architecture school and was thinking of either Cornell or Harvard. But an architect friend told him, "The only reason to go to Harvard or Cornell is to become a flamboyant asshole. And you've already achieved that." His friend recommended New Mexico. Stultz went. He did very well until he ran out of money. It was time for another job.

He was a rep for a high-end cabinetry company for a while, but it wasn't design so he lost interest and quit. He found a new job as a kitchen designer and got married again—to an architect. They

decided to move to Seattle where Stultz would finish his degree at the University of Washington. He did great in his design classes but barely passed the courses he had little interest in. The stress levels were high. "Things started to fall apart. Another marriage fell apart, which was really shattering. I couldn't bear to stay in Seattle after that."

He decided he would finish his degree at the University of Virginia, so he moved there and started working to save money for school. This job was very physical and entailed working every aspect of building custom homes, everything from digging trenches for concrete footings to roofing to finished carpentry. He loved it, but it didn't pay enough to finance his education, so he took a more lucrative offer and became director of design for a custom cabinetmaker in Lancaster County, Penn.

You may be starting to see a pattern emerge. Stultz had spent 10 years trying to get his degree, moving between schools and jobs and wives. But things would change now. He met another woman, fell in love, and soon she was pregnant. "Prospects for the degree completely evaporated. There was no way I could be the kind of dad I wanted to be and do architecture school the way I wanted to do it. So I poured all of my passion for design into kitchen-cabinet design." The job was good and lasted five years, but he did not get along with upper management. He was getting national attention for his work and was popular with designers, but not with his

management team. Eventually, they fired him. "By phone. That was kind of nasty because I had twin infant daughters and a son on the way and was living in a 250-year-old rented farmhouse in Amish country in eastern Lancaster County, heating the house with coal stoves. It was kind of like living in the 1940s. The kids remember it in a lot of ways as the happiest time of their lives."

He spent a month thinking about his next step and decided that he needed to work for himself. "I wanted a lot of flexibility and decided the best solution was to start my own consulting firm and be by myself. This was in 1998. I developed a really comprehensive line of historic-themed cabinetry for Premier Custom-Built, a company in Pennsylvania. Did a ton of research. Spent time at furniture museums and libraries, the University of Pennsylvania architecture library—I looked in rooms most people never see at places like the Philadelphia Museum of Art, because I was doing research. And I put together a copiously illustrated manual for this panorama of theme-designed kitchens."

It got a lot of attention from the industry. "Where this kind of loops back into my drawing is that all of the illustrations in this book, and there were about 1,200 of them, were hand-drawn graphite pencil illustrations. The design community absolutely loved it; there wasn't anything else like it out there. So I continued to work as a consultant for Premier and I took on a couple of other clients—got divorced again, unfortunately." ▶



And he decided that things had actually worked out well as far as his education went. "The further I got away from architecture, the more I became convinced that I had dodged a bullet in not finishing school and going to work for an architecture firm."

What he realized was that he was in love with furniture. "My design in luxury custom cabinetry became more and more furniture-oriented. If you look at the things I'm designing today, they're strong in both architectural and furniture design components. I've started to branch into designing tables and chairs, other types of case [freestanding cabinetry] pieces and thinking more about lighting."

His drawing continued through all of this, but until recently it's been a personal endeavor. "I've been very private about it up to a year or so ago. The art is extremely personal for me. It's difficult to expose myself like that."

That attitude started to modify when he re-involved himself with pipes. He'd started pipe smoking as a freshman in

college but had enjoyed smoking pipes only occasionally since. "I think my first pipe was a half-bent GBD. I remember paying \$20 for it, which was a lot of money for me at the time."

"My pipe collecting was sporadic. I'm a pretty compulsive individual. At various times I've collected cars, books, drawing instruments and antique General Electric refrigerators, believe it or not. But I also collected pipes. Being a designer and being interested in form and proportion, I was really picky about what I bought."

But his pipe smoking was irregular until he did a job in Chicago and discovered Iwan Ries, a pipe shop nearby. "I wandered in there and it was unbelievable. There are thousands of pipes and dozens and dozens of different tobaccos there. I ended up buying a Charatan freehand that I paid about \$250 for, which was a staggering amount of money for me at the time." In 2010 he started exploring the online pipe community.

"I discovered this pipemaker named Rad Davis who I thought had the most

extraordinary, exquisite, distinctly American, straightforward, no-nonsense sense of design and proportion that I'd ever seen. I read a little bit about him, got more fascinated, and then I stumbled across the Quality Briar website [www.qualitybriar.com] at the time when Nick Miller had his One-Year Anniversary Celebration pipes made. They were a variant on a Rhodesian, a collaboration between Rad Davis and Alex Florov. Only six were made. There was only one left when I found them, just a couple hours after they were listed. I called Nick and I'm thinking, \$550 for a pipe, you gotta be kidding me, I'm out of my tree, it's the recession, my business is not doing well, I have no business at all looking at any pipes."

He talked with Miller and liked him. "Nick said, 'Look, I'm not going to try to sell you a pipe, but I can tell you about the guys and I can tell you what I think.' He asked me a lot of questions, we had a nice conversation and I talked myself into it. So I bought this pipe, which is still my very favorite pipe. Then I bought a



couple more pipes. I found out about the Richmond pipe show. I hadn't known there was this pipe culture out there. So I went to the Richmond show." He met Rad Davis, Neill Archer Roan, Richard Friedman—and found the community as a whole enjoyable.

"It wasn't too long before I started thinking, man, it would be such great fun to carve pipes, and I bet I'd be good at it."

Stultz researched pipemaking and realized that it was impractical for him. "It would have been a huge investment in time at the very least. So I decided to start doing drawings of pipes."

He'd always found drawing to be restorative. "When I get in the groove, everything else goes away. I tend to draw things in series. Well, I had all these objects that I was obsessed with and I couldn't buy any more, but I thought, I should draw something I'm interested in. So I started doing drawings of pipes." He took the agonizing step of presenting his work on Facebook for other enthusiasts to see, and the response was encouraging. So he took it a step further and started a

blog (scottstultz.squarespace.com).

"I was getting quite a bit of enthusiasm from people and I thought, I'd love to get more involved in the pipe world; I don't want to be just a collector. I thought maybe my contribution, instead of trying to make pipes, could be to do drawings of pipes."

He offered to do the poster for the Chicago pipe show this year, and the offer was gratefully accepted. He has now shown his work at two pipe shows and has done a calendar featuring his pipe-themed art.

Stultz's artistic style seems to resonate with pipe people. "I'm really into direct experience and the most direct transfer of that experience to others. I love the old-fashioned storytelling tradition, for instance, because the farther things get removed from the source material, the more watered down they are. So I don't erase when I draw. I like dry media because it is about as direct as you can get without cutting your veins open and just bleeding onto the paper. Every little nuance, every mood goes down, and I

find if I go fast enough, so that I don't think about it, the work tends to have a lot of energy. That's important: the energy, the emotion, the immediacy.

"I would love to be appreciated for the real content of my work, which doesn't have all that much to do with pipes. If you look at my series of drawings of chairs and portraits and landscapes I've done since I was a kid, the content is something a lot more elusive than the subject matter itself. Am I drawing pipes? Yes. Is that what the real content is? Not really. The real content is how I feel about being alive. It's something that if I try to articulate it, it obscures what it's all about. It's an emotion, an experience, a set of values that can be communicated only in a visual medium." P&T

Website: www.scottstultz.com
 Blog: scottstultz.squarespace.com

For those interested, a longer, more detailed version of this interview has been posted on ptfoundations.com.

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Marty Pulvers, Proprietor

Quiet elegance

Rad Davis achieves elegance in simplicity

By way of background, I, and clearly many others, have found Rad Davis' pipes, and Rad as well, to be intriguing. I'm not sure why on either count. If you are walking the show room floor in St. Charles, Ill., during the Chicago pipe show, Rad's pipes don't look so different than all the other pipes on the floor,

and Rad doesn't look that different than the other men in the room. So, in the midst of his less than exotic pipes and seemingly normal personality, what accounts for this level of fascination (not to mention a strong and devoted buying public among the cognoscenti, both in the U.S. and abroad) that is

generated by his output?

With no immediate answer forthcoming, I decided to shelve the curiosity and take another angle; perhaps I could purchase some pipes from Rad for resale.

"No," he frankly tells me. "It is not that I am averse to taking your money, Marty, it's just that I am selling all the pipes I can make, and I have an obligation to supply the people that brought me to this dance. It is they who have provided this shiny silver Cabriolet you see sitting here, drawn by these thoroughbreds ... who will revert to being rats once the clock strikes. But, should I get to where I have a small surplus of pipes, you are now on the list."

Fair enough; you have to respect a person with that ethical sense, even if you hate him for it. Yet, it was now quite clear that many people, or enough people, have good thoughts about the pipes that Rad Davis makes. In a very competitive market, his pipes were selling sufficiently well for him to deflect new business. Something more solid than a short-term fad was going on here. These deep roots and the solid trunk that grew from those roots in just about a five-year period deserve a



somewhat deeper inspection.

We tend to believe that by understanding the child, we can better understand the man. It's not likely that Rad was pushed into a pipemaking apprenticeship at the age of 7 by his father, so what did stimulate his interest in pipes and subsequently, pipemaking?

"My maternal grandfather was a pipe smoker," he tells me. "He died when I was around 5 years old and I don't remember much about him except that he smoked a pipe. When I would go over to my grandmother's house to spend the night as a kid, she would let me play with his pipes that she had kept, and they just always fascinated me."

Rad started smoking pipes in the early '70s and got the urge to try his hand at pipemaking around 2002, when he met Mark Tinsky while he was a fly-fishing guide in Montana, where Mark lives. Mark gave Rad some basic briar kits to start, but Rad had his own ideas for shaping them.

"I never really drew inspiration from Mark," he explains. "We were doing totally different things with pipes. I was making the old 1970s-style Danish-type freehands with lots of plateau, and he was doing what he does, making mostly classic shapes. What Mark did for me was teach me how to make pipes and show me what machinery and equipment I needed to get a shop started. Nowadays, Mark and I often look to each other when we have a technical question that we don't know the answer to. It feels pretty nice to be able to help the guy who helped me so much in the beginning. I like being able to return favors, and Mark made me able to do that. In return, I also had to teach him how to fly fish properly."

Rad probably made a hash out of those predrilled briar kits, but he eventually evolved into making pipes he could sell.

"When I was learning to make pipes at Mark's shop, I accumulated around three dozen pipes over that summer. I asked Mark if he thought that I might be able to sell them, and he said he didn't see why not. He thought there was definitely a market for quality handmade pipes in the \$50 to \$75 range. He very graciously put a page on his website for me to offer my pipes for sale. This gave





me a very nice shortcut to exposure of my work. Mark has a large and loyal following, and people would see this heading, 'Rad Davis Freehand Pipes,' and get curious, and I started selling some pipes. I will always be indebted to Mark for his generosity in doing this. This is why I had no hesitation in sharing with him my awesome fly-fishing abilities."

Rad says the last bit with a slight smile and a mischievous twinkle in his eye. This testimony gives strength to that old adage: "Give a man a fish, and you will have provided him with an excellent meal, if he has some good side dishes, Pinot Grigio to sip and a properly made dessert. But, *teach* a man to fish and you may well be creating another pipemaker."

With a family to support, Rad's transition into a full-time professional pipemaker didn't happen overnight.

"At the end of the summer of 2004, Hurricane Ivan ran over my house in Foley, Ala. Literally. The eye of the storm went over Foley. I was still in Montana finishing up the guide season, and my wife was in Foley. My two sons were living in Foley, also, so she had plenty of help getting the house ready for the storm, but it was a scary time, being the first major hurricane to pass over Foley since we had lived there. Luckily, we suffered no damage, but my being in Montana at the time was not a good thing. We decided that I really didn't need to be in Montana any more during hurricane season, and the pipes were selling pretty regularly, so I determined that I could keep it going year round and probably do OK."

One might say that it showed a degree of supreme self-confidence merely to believe that he could compete for the always-tight pipe dollar against so many good pipemakers, yet Rad made the plunge anyway.

"I didn't have that belief at first," he explains. "I did know that I was selling my pipes at a low-enough price that pipe smokers would be willing to take a chance on buying from me, and I could make three or four of those pipes a day. Remember, I wasn't hand-cutting stems at that point, and I was making 15-16 pipes a week, so I wasn't competing with the high-grade market at all, but was selling a very decently shaped

freehand-style pipe with a factory stem attached at a very affordable price."

While he started his full-time professional pipemaking career making free-hand pipes, Rad doesn't make many of them anymore.

"I kept trying new things, eventually getting into hand-cut stems and more contemporary shapes and just making better pipes. I try to make each pipe better than the one before, and I always see something that could have been done better on every pipe. As I got better and demand for my work increased, I increased my prices to reflect the quality of my work, always keeping in mind that I want to appeal price-wise to the largest segment of the market that I can. As far as making a living at it, it has far exceeded my expectations, and I'm very happy about that. All it takes is a lot of work," he says with a wry smile.

The creative process is often such a mystery, with the dynamics being different for every single artisan. Where, then, do Rad's creative juices come from? What comprises the unique Rad Davis touch that makes for a top-quality pipemaker?

"I work 9 to 5, Monday through Friday," he simply says.

That's it? Is this article done?

"My creative process usually takes place in the shower. I think about pipes and what I'd like to try. It might not be that day, but I usually get around to trying out what I thought about in the shower. I also think about pipes most of the rest of the day, including when I'm in the shop making pipes and when I'm asleep. Basically, I think up things and then try them out.

"I envision shapes I like, mainly the flow of the shape, and I try to re-create that flow with my own style. I don't usually copy shapes unless they're a classic, like a billiard or a Castello 55, or it's a commission. What I really like is coming up with a variant on my own of a classic or a recognizable shape. Occasionally, I'll come up with my own shapes (at least I think they're my own—one never really knows). I was very surprised to learn that Dunhill was copying my Squashed Tomato shape as early as the 1920s."

Do creative juices run out? How are they replenished after a hard day?

"I don't think they start to evaporate.



There are definitely days when things are slower in my brain. When that happens, I usually make a classic billiard or something similar."

The often-solitary life of a pipemaker suits Rad's natural independent temperament and fits with the way he likes to work. "There's no one telling me what needs to be done. I know what needs to be done."

But there is the somewhat infrequent opportunity for pipemakers to meet their public at pipe shows. I almost met Rad when he snubbed me at a Richmond show once. I wonder if pipe shows help Rad develop as a pipemaker.

"You learn something at every show. Mainly what customers are looking for currently and what the hot new shape is (if there is one at the time) and what the trends are. It's also an opportunity to talk with customers and other pipemakers. There is so much to learn from both, and pipe shows are pretty much the only opportunity to do so.

"I go to pipe shows to gain exposure for my work, sell some pipes and have a lot of fun. It's always great to see a whole bunch of friends and customers you don't get to see but once or twice a year, hang out and drink heavily.

"Every pipemaker should attend shows, in my opinion. [Shows] are the only place that many of their customers can actually see and hold the maker's pipes in their hands before buying them. It's hard to judge the work from pictures on a website, and the more people that come to know what to expect from his work, the better it is for the pipemaker."

For we hobbyists and pipe smokers, a pipe show is about the only time we

get to meet the pipemakers and give them a piece of our minds. We would love to think that the pipemaker is actually listening.

"At my first Richmond show—my very first pipe show—I learned that if I wanted to progress, I needed to learn to hand-cut stems and make much better pipes."

Hand-cutting stems is time consuming, but it can probably be argued as being the gateway to high-grade pipes, whatever that means. It's a time-consuming process, though. "Depending on the stem (taper, saddle, inlays, flares, etc.), it takes anywhere from an hour to two hours for me to make a stem. And all of my stems are hand-cut from rod stock. To make a finished pipe takes me anywhere from three to four hours."

As to that extra work a hand-cut stem requires, Rad and I discuss Ingo Garbe's contention that the last quarter-inch of the stem is the most important part of a pipe. I think he's talking in terms of the user being aware, consciously or otherwise, of what feels comfortable in the mouth and thus brings the smoker back to that pipe.

"I totally agree. Not only is Garbe talking in terms of user comfort, but, I think, in terms of the shape of the interior of the slot and its merger with the round smoke channel. If a deep V in the slot is not widened enough to handle at least the same air volume of the rest of the channel, then it creates a restriction there that causes moisture to accumulate, which will run down to the tenon end, collect there and cause a gurgle when you draw on the pipe." ►



If the stem is critical, the same can certainly be said about the briar. "I've used briar from several different sources over the years," Rad explains. "Country of origin is almost impossible to determine these days. The best I can tell you is that it comes from the Mediterranean region, and the briar I buy is cut and cured by Italians and Greeks. What matters most is the way briar is cut and cured at the mill that processes it. If it's cut, boiled and dried properly, it will make fine pipes.

"I asked Tonni Nielsen at a pipe show whether briar origin made any difference in the quality of pipes, and he said, 'Briar is briar. It doesn't matter which country it comes from as long as it's cured properly.' Rainer Barbi said pretty much the same thing in an article I read online, with regard to everyone's rampant desire for unobtainable Corsican briar.

"Algerian briar for years held a mythical reputation for unsurpassed quality until it became readily available again at Pipe Maker's Emporium and also directly from the mill in Algeria a few years ago. Not surprisingly, pipes made from Algerian briar were no better or worse than any other high-quality pipes. Of course, the Algerian available today is probably not nearly as good as the Algerian available many years ago."

Rad's tongue is clearly angled sharply to the right with his last statement. He then adds, "Rarity will never fail to increase desirability, whether there is any real quality difference or not."

Rumor has it that once he receives those properly boiled and cured briar blocks, his personal aging process includes spreading peanut butter,

chunky, on each piece. "I've had many customers ask what extra steps I take to cure my briar to make them break in so easily and smoke so well. My answer is: nothing at all. It ain't me. It's the briar. Good briar will make good pipes. I age my briar in my shop for a few months after I receive it. As long as the briar is dry throughout, it will make a fine pipe. I've gotten enough positive comments regarding the smoking quality of my pipes as well as having smoked many of them myself to know that it really isn't necessary to age briar for years and years to make a pipe that smokes well."

For what it's worth, the venerated Jess Chonowitsch and Lars Ivarsson, each of whom gets thousands of dollars for some of their pipes, were asked the same question about the curing of their briar when they attended a Los Angeles pipe show years ago. Their answer was exactly the same as Rad's. They did nothing to the wood. They simply let it sit, just as Rad Davis and probably almost all other pipemakers do.

(But if I ever get into pipemaking, that Skippy approach is definitely the way I'm going to cure wood.)

We haven't much discussed the subject of filthy lucre, but we must, we must. At some point there are diminishing returns in terms of time invested and quality extracted, and Rad's pipes are prized for what many deem to be a buyer-centric (I may have made that up) balance between quality delivered and price paid. So, what is Rad working on to improve, or should I say "refine," without having to devote so much time that his prices would rise steeply?

"I think there's always room for

improvement in my work, but at the same time, I'm not looking to try things that will take vast amounts of increased labor. I look for things to increase efficiency. Efficiency in pipemaking is a hidden price increase for the pipemaker. He doesn't have to increase prices; it just takes less time to accomplish what he wants to do. Refinement doesn't take any more time; it just takes more concentration and attention to accomplish what you're after in the same amount of time."

And what are Rad's thoughts on the coated versus the uncoated bowl debate, if it is a debate?

"I coated bowls for a little while early on, maybe about 100 pipes, more or less. Greg Pease told me at the time he was considering writing an article about why he thought a pipe with a coated bowl could be a good pipe, but never a great pipe. Whether he was right or wrong, I don't know. I started paying close attention to posts on the forums about bowl coatings. The most positive comment I read at the time was along the lines of, 'If it has a bowl coating, it's not a deal breaker, if I really like the pipe.' The vast majority of posts indicated that pipe smokers preferred uncoated bowls, so I stopped coating them. I'll coat a bowl if requested, but I've never gotten that request."

Rad clearly wants to appeal to as wide a base as is reasonable, unless I need another bop on the back of the head with mom's skillet? "This is correct," he agrees. "As obtuse as you generally appear to be, Marty, I do want my work and pricing to appeal to the largest segment of the market possible. But I am very detail oriented



as far as my work goes. I am my biggest critic. Things have to be absolutely right before a pipe goes up for sale.

"Pricing is one of the hardest things to do in pipemaking, especially in the beginning. Later on it becomes a lot easier when you already have a baseline to go by and you know what sells. My prices are established by several different factors, including grain/ring structure, inlays, shank extensions, shape complexity and other factors. I start with a baseline of around \$325 and determine the price from there based on all of these things."

And now that he can better appreciate the skills of other pipemakers, he finds himself immersed in trying to pull off the same tricks. "Absolutely! Making a pipe is very easy. Making a really nice pipe is not so easy. Not everyone can do it. I feel very fortunate that I have an eye for shape and hands that can execute a shape I see in my mind's eye. I had no idea that this was so until I started doing it. I also know my limitations, and there are plenty of pipemakers out there who just blow my mind with what they're doing!"

I've long maintained that a bit of the pipemaker can be seen in each example of that pipemaker's work, if only one were astute enough to make the right connections. If nothing else, that contention makes both the pipe and the pipemaker more interesting to me.

Rad strikes me as someone who is not a self-promoter and indeed, probably won't speak until spoken to. "I'm not comfortable with self-promotion. I don't write flowery descriptions of my pipes on my website. I think that a pipe should sell itself without the need

for hyperbole. If someone doesn't like the shape or the work, no amount of description is going to sell it to them. If they like the shape or the work, the pipe will sell itself. I try to make each pipe better than the last."

Incontestably, the shapes Rad provides and the quality of the work has created a following, including some rather prominent collectors on at least two continents.

"Maybe *well-known collectors* is a better term. When this started happening it was very gratifying for me. I can remember Paige Simms telling me at a Richmond show that what he had bought from me was a 'high-grade' pipe. I was thrilled. I never aspired to make 'high-grade' pipes; in fact, I thought I probably wouldn't do that. My aim was to make each pipe better than the one before. If you do that, I think, you can't help but get better."

"It began to dawn on me that others were seeing the quality of my work when I began to receive very positive emails from customers who said that the quality of my work took a backseat to no one. When you hear this from people who really know pipes, it's very gratifying, and it makes me want to try to become even better at what I do. It's inspiring."

"One of those 'prominent collectors' who was very instrumental in helping me progress as a pipemaker is Erwin Van Hove. The poor guy lives in a third-world country." Actually, Belgium, with a standard of living essentially equal to ours ... but an inside joke between Rad, Erwin and this interviewer. But he knows his pipes, and he does not BS a pipemaker when asked

for a critique of that person's work. Sometimes his comments are hard to hear, but he's nearly always right, and if the maker is willing to listen, he will improve.

There seems to be a unifying principle behind each of Rad's pipes. "Quiet elegance is what I strive for," he says. "I like simple, elegant shapes. I don't dream of making more flamboyant or complicated pipes at all—however, I will attempt one now and again. Sometimes it works out, sometimes not. I think I'm pretty well recognized by now. I don't make big splashes, but pipe smokers know who I am and what I make. I've been called such things as 'the most underappreciated pipemaker today,' and my work has been described as having the 'best price to value ratio today.'"

And pipe smokers appreciate Rad's simple style and quiet demeanor. "I know many pipe smokers like my work, but I cannot inform people as to why they should like my work or explain why a certain pipe I made should be considered beautiful, or how wonderful I am. It's just not in me to do that, though I will joke around sometimes at pipe shows. I had a customer at Chicago this past year who wanted to have his picture taken with me after buying a pipe. His wife was taking the picture and expressed a bit of puzzlement at her husband wanting the picture taken. I told her it was because 'I am awesome!' and we all had a great laugh. This is all positive in my view. What more could I ask for? I do what I really love, and I make money doing it. It really is a dream job, and I do feel appreciated." P&T

The Perfect Smoke

Fred Hanna answers nine questions about his new book

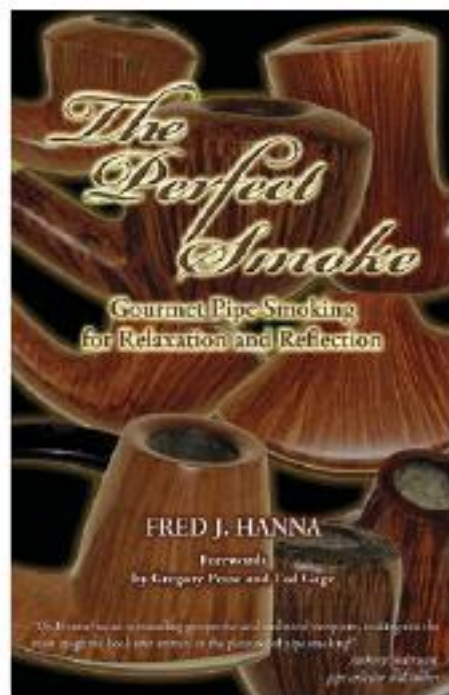
1. What is the purpose of the book?

To explore, explain and extol the glory and grandeur of pipe smoking at its very best. Along the way, I examine the characteristics of the great smoking pipes, exquisite tobaccos and the proper smoking and tasting skills necessary to recognize, appreciate and produce the perfect smoke. I am attempting to share what little knowledge I have acquired with my fellow pipe enthusiasts. I do this with the hope that perhaps it can increase and elevate, perhaps just a bit, their enjoyment of pipes and tobaccos, and possibly enhance the overall attractiveness of the pipe hobby in the process.

2. What makes *The Perfect Smoke* different from other pipe books?

This book is unique in that the primary focus is on examining the highest heights of pipe smoking and pipe tobacco tasting possible. It portrays pipe smoking as a gourmet tasting experience that, at its best, is equivalent, and even superior, to the finest wines, cigars and liquors, and in the same league as the finest cuisine. I have tasted wines that sell for thousands of dollars a bottle (for example, 1929 Romanée Conti and 1875 Chateau Mouton Rothschild), and I can tell you that the finest vintage tobaccos in the greatest-tasting pipes are every bit as glorious and a helluva lot less expensive. The vast majority of essays in the book are dedicated to some aspect of extracting the maximum pleasure from the pipe experience.

In addition, I treat the proper methods of smoking not as a list of dos and don'ts but as the development of essential skills, without which the enjoyment of the highest-quality pipes and tobaccos will never manifest. Another unique aspect of the book is a review of



scientific research on nicotine and the many benefits of this interesting drug. I believe this information will be viewed as a revelation to many pipe lovers. Still another unique aspect of the book is an analysis of how pipe smoking stimulates thought and problem-solving. Many people, including such luminaries as Albert Einstein and Mark Twain, have mentioned this phenomenon, but few, if any, have ever attempted to explain it.

3. Are there photos?

Actually, the photos are another unique aspect of the book. It displays close to 60 photos of pipes. But these are not just any pipes. The photos are of remarkable straight grains. I believe that this book contains more photos of exceptional straight-grain pipes than any other book ever published. The photos are often of the finest examples

of many pipe brands. They're in black and white, but hey, it's straight grain. Who needs color when the grain is the focus and all the grain is going straight up and down anyway? Actually, the truth is, I could not afford the cost of color photos. I hope that the photos are good enough. I also hope that the shapes of the pipes will be appealing to readers.

One of the purposes of the photos is to illustrate for my fellow collectors and pipe enthusiasts the tremendous range and variation of exceptional straight-grain pipes. No two straight grains are alike. There are infinite variations. Of course, all of the pipes in the book are from my own award-winning collection, as I am a straight-grain fanatic. My love of straight grains is so intense that some have suggested that I should tattoo straight grain on my face, adding that it would improve my appearance and enhance my personality. There are other photos in the book as well. These are of famous, revered, vintage tobaccos variously pictured in pull-top, coin-twist and cutter-top-style tins.

4. Are there any pipe brands that you recommend as the pipes that are most likely to provide the perfect smoke?

No. The book does not point to certain brands of pipes as providing the greatest taste, as I and many others do not believe this is the case in any way, manner or fashion. No pipemaker or company has a monopoly on the perfect smoke. It is a far more complex matter than who made the pipe and what methods he or she used in construction. Due to the nature of our beloved briar, pipes from many brands have the potential to deliver the perfect smoke, and some pipes from those same many brands fall decidedly short. The problem is that

although many high-grade pipes deliver a great smoke, very few individual pipes of any brand approach perfection. This phenomenon is addressed in an essay called "The Magic Pipe."

5. What's the hottest topic covered?

Way back in 2001, I published an article in *The Pipe Collector*, the newsletter of the North American Society of Pipe Collectors (NASPC), that started a debate in that newsletter that lasted for close to four years. The topic was what is now well-known as the issue of briar versus brand. The discussion centered on the idea that some pipe brands have a unique, identifiable taste all their own that can be readily distinguished from other brands, which in turn have their own identifiable taste. The debate was whether or not one can recognize this taste and identify a pipe brand only by its taste. This became known as the myth of brand and maker. In the book, I have rewritten and clarified many points in the original article and added other essays that explore the fine points of this topic. Since the book is about the perfect smoke, the question revolves around whether the perfect smoke is available exclusively through one brand or whether it is an individual chunk of briar of a pipe, of any brand, that holds the keys to the perfect smoke. This topic remains so controversial that a closely related version of it was revisited at the 2012 Chicago Show, 11 years after the original article.

Another hot topic is addressed by an essay called "What is Meant by Smoking Quality: Engineering vs. Taste." Smoking quality is a common term, freely and widely used in the pipe world to refer to how well, or not, a pipe delivers a good smoke. But in my view this topic has never been fully explored or delineated. There is a debate among some members of the pipe community regarding whether engineering is the most important aspect of a great smoking pipe. However, so many experienced pipe collectors and smokers have had pipes that are perfectly engineered but still fall short in that the taste of the smoke itself is lacking. Conversely, many great pipes are poorly engineered and deliver a magnificent taste. This curious contradiction is discussed at some depth in the essay.

6. Why does the book have two forewords? Isn't one enough?

Yeah. This is a bit strange, I admit. I was trying to figure out who would be the best choice to write the foreword of the book, and I really was not all that excited about including an afterword. Gregory Pease and Tad Gage were my first choices for a foreword. Both are well-known in the pipe world and are widely respected as collectors and enthusiasts who also are dedicated to the quest for the perfect smoke. I could not decide between the two, so I asked them both and they each agreed. It actually turned out quite well, because both of them did a great job and wrote very entertaining and quite different forewords. I think the book is better off because of it. Not only that, I asked Dr. Bill Unger, the editor of NASPC Press, to write an editor's introduction. I was very fortunate to have Bill involved as editor of the book. He has a Ph.D. in literature and is also a very smart guy who made some great suggestions. I was also fortunate to have Eddie Fliess, of Graphic Touch in Columbus, design the montage pictured on the front and back covers. Eddie designed and laid out the book as well. The NASPC Press is a fantastic group of people.

7. What makes you qualified to write about the perfect smoke?

Actually, I am not sure that I am qualified to write about this subject. In fact, I am not sure that anyone is qualified. There are so many mysteries, myths, complexities and ambiguities surrounding the topic of the perfect smoke that we still do not have any final answers in so many areas. These mysteries and myths persist largely because there are no grants available from governments or foundations that would pay for scientific research on the subject. Remarkably, there are so many myths masquerading as fact that it may be a long, long time before we come to any definite conclusions. For that matter, I have very often seen people attempt to expose myths regarding pipes and tobaccos only to end up perpetrating more myths in the process. No one has a monopoly on truth in this field, in spite of what they might claim or how they present themselves.

Having said all that, I have been smoking a pipe since 1967 and smok-

ing and collecting high-grade pipes and tobaccos since 1974. Discovering the true nature of the perfect smoke has been a passion of mine since the late 1970s, and I have published articles about it since 2001. I am also trained to do research in an area of human science called phenomenology, which is essentially the study of human experience, how it is structured and how it is constituted. This includes tasting and pipe collecting. In the book, I have tried to communicate what I have learned, believing that it may have the capacity to take our understanding a step further. Allow me to repeat that the book is not intended to be the final word on the subject. Nobody has that.

8. Why isn't your picture anywhere in the book or in this article?

This is because I would like for people to buy and read the book without being deterred by anything unpleasant. I want to make the experience of reading the book as painless as possible. In other words, by not including my photo, I believe that I am merely showing my consideration for my fellow pipe lovers.

9. How will the book improve the pipe-smoking experiences of those who read it?

Many have told me they believe *The Perfect Smoke* has the potential to help pipe lovers enhance their overall level of enjoyment of fine pipes and tobaccos. Essays that cover subjects like how to choose the great pipe, tin baking, air-pocket packing, the benefits of nicotine, seven essential pipe skills, briar versus brand, pipe mud and how to taste pipes and tobaccos may be of benefit to a good number of pipe smokers. Early reviews of the book have been quite positive, and I am greatly encouraged. P&T

The Perfect Smoke can be purchased through the North American Society of Pipe Collectors. Visit naspc.org or send a check or money order for \$25 U.S., \$30 Canada or \$35 international to NASPC, P.O. Box 9642, Columbus, OH 43209.

Collectible “smoake” for the pipe smoker who has (almost) everything

Most pipe smokers appreciate the prose and poetry written about tobacco. Some may even have a volume or two of such literature sitting on their bookshelves. What I am about to recommend is a small collection of “smoake” books that provides a broad overview of this once-popular genre. Intriguingly, this collection emanates from a single turn of the 20th century publisher. Furthermore, these books were produced in a very attractive format, so that collectively they would make a striking addition to a shelf of prized briars and smoking accessories.

Celebration of tobacco in prose, poetry and song was in full swing from approximately 1880 to 1920. More specifically, its heyday was the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th. During

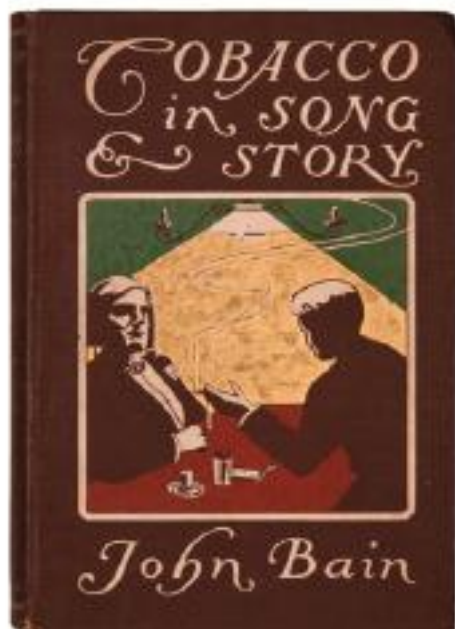
this time one publisher stands above the rest in its contribution to this type of literature. Whereas each of a diverse group of publishing firms produced a single title (rarely two) in this genre, H.M. Caldwell Co. (1896–1914) published a series of titles, both original works and reprints, combined with innovative presentation.

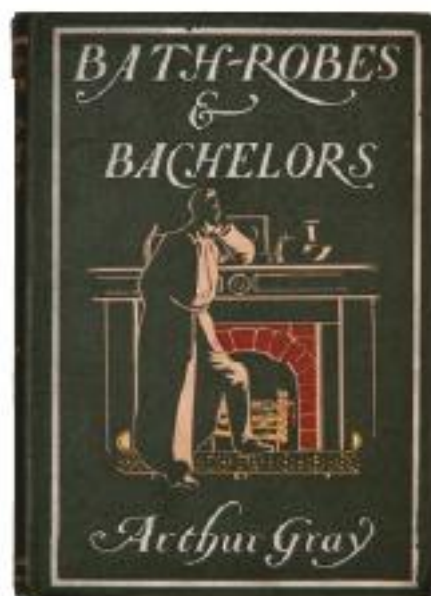
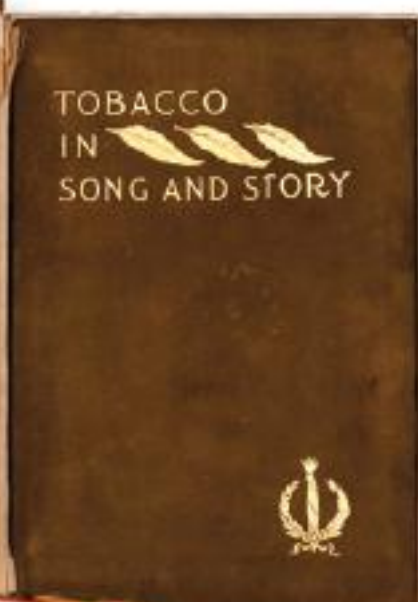
A brief but important digression: Almost all the Caldwell titles to be discussed can be purchased, for example, as print-on-demand (POD). But what does one obtain for this effort?—the text or content, certainly, but little else. Absent is the quality and charm of the original work with its distinctive binding, size, color, type of paper, bookmark and so forth. Compare the Caldwell titles in their original format to their POD counterparts and a striking dreariness will be found in the latter. Even from a financial standpoint, these books are not necessarily a bargain, if one has just a little patience to seek out an original printing. My advice is to do just that. In pursuing these tomes, the pipe smoker will be rewarded with a group of visually appealing books, along with the publisher’s creative add-ons, that will certainly enhance the owner’s enjoyment of their contents.

Now to my specific recommendations. In 1901, Caldwell published *Tobacco in Song & Story*, the first of three compilations for the company by John Bain Jr. (owner and publisher of *Tobacco Leaf*, an influential tobacco trade paper at the time). In this reprint (first published in 1896

by Arthur Gray & Co.), Bain states, “There is something in the book that will appeal to every lover of the weed, no matter what his station in life may be or the grade of tobacco he consumes.” Indeed, he covers quite a few topics. In the chapter “The Philosophy of Smoking,” he quotes “Sam Slick, the Clockmaker,” who echoes the belief of most pipe smokers that “the moment a man takes to a pipe, he becomes a philosopher. It’s the poor man’s friend; it calms the mind, soothes the temper, and makes a man patient under difficulties. It has made more good men, good husbands, kind masters, indulgent fathers, than any other blessed thing on this universal earth.” And I suspect that they would also agree with Thackeray’s observation in “Smokers’ Stories” that “Honest men, with pipes or cigars in their mouths, have great physical advantages in conversation. You may stop talking if you like, but the breaks of silence never seem disagreeable, being filled up by the puffing of smoke; hence there is no awkwardness in resuming the conversation, no straining for effect—sentiments are delivered in a grave, easy manner.”

Caldwell published this book in both cloth and “ooze” leather bindings (ooze is an obsolete term for a vegetable-tanning liquor used in a process that produced a finish like suede, which gives these volumes a distinctive appearance and feel). The latter binding was housed in a striking cardboard imitation cigar box, complete with colorful inner and





outer cigar labels. The book came with a yellow cigar ribbon bookmark, imprinted with the word "Perfectos" (following a precedent started by Arthur Gray & Co.'s edition), and a frontispiece. Thus, unless otherwise noted, a format was established for a specific approach to and niche in publishing its subsequent tobacco titles that continued for the next eight years.

Also in 1901, Caldwell published Arthur Gray's *Bath Robes and Bachelors and Other Good Things*, which first appeared in 1897 under the author's imprint with the title *The Good Things of Earth: For Any Man Under the Sun*. Advertised as "a book of original sketches pertaining to the different comforts and luxuries peculiarly allied to men," it covered such topics as "Slippers," "The Razor," etc. It is included here because not only was the book published in the format described previously, but it also contains two appropriate essays—"My Pipe" and "Cigars." In the former, written by Julian Ralph, appears this evocative comment:

To sit, pipe in mouth, before the crackling fire, after a day's hunting has ended, with an exquisite meal of fried fish and bacon, and stewed tomatoes; when the darkness is upon the ground beyond the circle of fire-light, when only a faint relic of daylight is seen in the openings overhead, when the tattooing of the woodpeckers has ceased; and only now and then is heard the last good-night chirp of a cricket or a tree-toad—ah, then the little clouds of tobacco-smoke ascend from grateful, happy smokers like thanksgivings.

(Please note: As to Caldwell reprints that may only show a copyright date, the publication date was determined by consulting *Publishers' Trade List Annual*, a compilation of publishers' catalogs.)

The following year, Caldwell offered the ooze leather editions of *Tobacco in Song & Story* and *Bath Robes and Bachelors* housed in a

wood imitation cigar box, called the "Holiday or Presentation Edition"—a somewhat rare item, especially if the lid is still attached. This box also included inner and outer cigar labels.

In 1903, Caldwell released an original publication, *Tobacco Leaves*, the second compilation by Bain that was intended to be a companion volume to *Tobacco in Song & Story*. This, too, contains a diverse range of topics, from the obligatory section of poetry to "Tobacco Facts and Fancies," wherein is found Kingsley's famous quote about tobacco from his book *Westward Ho!*: "for when all things were made, none were better than this—to be a lone man's companion, a bachelor's friend, a hungry man's food, a sad man's cordial, a wakeful man's sleep, and a chilly man's fire; while for staunching of wounds, purging of them, and settling of the stomach, there's no herb like it under the canopy of heaven!"

Next up is James Barrie's *My Lady Nicotine* (first published in 1890 in England). Within a year of the company's founding, Caldwell began publishing a series of reprints of this popular title. By 1905, however, it was "brought into the fold," so to speak, and received the same treatment as the titles discussed so far. The book is a perennial favorite among pipe smokers, given such observations as:

Once a man marries, his eyes are opened to many things that he was quite unaware of previously, among them being the delight of adding an article of furniture to the drawing-room every month and having a bedroom in pink and gold, the door of which is always locked. If men would only consider that every cigar they smoke would buy part of a new piano stool in terra-cotta plush, and that for every pound tin of tobacco purchased away goes a vase for growing dead geraniums in, they would surely hesitate. They do not consider, however, until they marry, and then they are forced to it. For my own part, I fail to see why bachelors

should be allowed to smoke as much as they like when we are debarred from it.

This 1905 edition, however, stands apart from the other Caldwell tobacco books in one important aspect. It contains superb illustrations and decorations—almost 140!—by M.B. Prendergast (1858–1924), an artist who worked for a very brief time as a poster designer and book illustrator. The illustrations first appeared in Joseph Knight Co.'s 1895 edition, and as Nancy Finlay keenly observes:

Prendergast's lively and often humorous illustrations are cleverly integrated into the text, where they complement the witty tone of Barrie's prose. The cover design, which deals with a faintly scandalous subject—a young woman smoking a cigarette—is a masterpiece. No *femme fatale*, Prendergast's woman smoker is a sweetly innocent young girl shown amidst swirling smoke and draperies and pink nicotiana or tobacco blossoms" (Nancy Finlay, *Artists of the Book in Boston 1890–1910*, The Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, Cambridge, Mass., 1985).

The Caldwell edition, however, does not replicate this same design on the cover, but does reproduce it on the title page. And an additional page, inserted between the original frontispiece and title page, shows a photograph of author James Barrie and an illustration of a man smoking a clay pipe.

What is perhaps most striking about this book is the page layout that "diverges from the preferred approach of Boston publishers ... that the artist can use any portion of the page not occupied by the text Prendergast's decorations and illustrations dramatically invade the text, as well as surround it in an exciting and provocative manner" (Carol Clark, et al., *Maurice Brazil Prendergast, Charles Prendergast: A Catalogue Raisonné*, Williams College of Museum of Art,



Williamstown, Mass., and Prestel-Verlag, Munich, 1990).

Two additional items were offered by Caldwell in 1905. Joseph Knight's *Pipe and Pouch: The Smoker's Own Book of Poetry* was available in cloth in, appropriately, an ooze leather pouch with drawstring. This, too, was a reprint, first published in 1894 by Joseph Knight Co. As Knight notes in the preface, not only is his compilation "the first on the subject aiming at anything like completeness," but he also strove to "maintain, as far as possible, a high standard and include only the best." Pipe smokers who enjoy the occasional cigar will certainly empathize with the sentiment of "Two Other Hearts":

Full tender beamed the light of
love down from his manly
face,
As he pressed her to his bosom
in a fervent, fond embrace.
No cost of others' happiness
found place within his
thought;
The weakness of life's brittle
thread no dim forebodings
brought.

But tenderer than the light of
love, more brittle than life's
thread,
The shrouds that wrapped two
other hearts gave up their
withered dead;

For, crumbling in his waistcoat,
their glowing future dashed,
Two excellent Havanas were
very badly smashed.

And the Caldwell catalog announced another special item, similar to the two-volume "Holiday Edition" released in 1901: "The Smoker's Library," described as "A Unique Gift for Whist or Euchre Prize." This unites in a single, wood imitation cigar box the ooze leather editions of four of the five titles discussed so far: *Tobacco in Song & Story*, *Tobacco Leaves*, *My Lady Nicotine* and *Pipe and Pouch*. The question remains as to whether Caldwell produced this item, although it was advertised for 10 years. In more than 40 years of collecting, I have neither seen nor heard of an example! There is, however, one way to prove it once existed, even if the box itself did not survive (not an unlikely prospect, given its awkward size and fragility). The Caldwell ooze leather binding of *Pipe and Pouch* was only made for this special item, so if such an example turns up, it could only have come from "The Smoker's Library."

In 1906, Caldwell brought out an original publication, *Cigarettes in Fact and Fancy*. This was Bain's third and last contribution to tobacco literature. It was written in collaboration with Bain's editor, Carl Werner (author of *Tobaccoland*—dedicated

to Bain). This volume was offered in pigskin and housed in an imitation cigarette box. As advertised in the publisher's catalog, Bain "contributed many interesting and not well-known facts concerning the seductive little rolls." It covers a wide variety of topics, even including a section on "My Lady and the Cigarette: Should Women Smoke?" that opens with the statement: "The problem of woman's right to smoke was practically settled a decade ago ...!"

Caldwell's final, and original, contribution to tobacco literature appeared in 1909 with Joseph Knight's *A Smoker's Reveries: A Companion Book to Pipe and Pouch*. In Edgar A. Guest's poem "Joy Disturbed," the poet speaks to the trial and tribulations of at least some smokers. Settling down to smoke and read a good book, the husband is repeatedly interrupted by family members with various demands. He finally concludes:

Some men there are who smoke
and read
All undisturbed and still;
But they're unmarried men,
indeed,
Or else their wives are ill.

In 1914, H.M. Caldwell Co. was acquired by Dodge Publishing Co., which continued to offer the aforementioned titles. The "Holiday



covers. Gift top, double edges, label marks, etc., as on a cigar box.

HOLIDAY OR PRESENTATION EDITION

"Tobacco in Song and Story" and "Bath Robes and Bachelors," each bound in one calf tobacco shade cushion in a cedar box with label marks, etc., as on a cigar box. Price, \$2.50

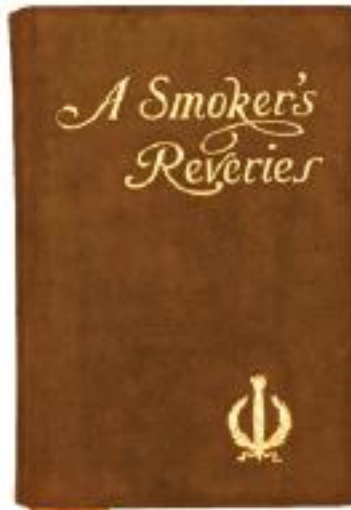
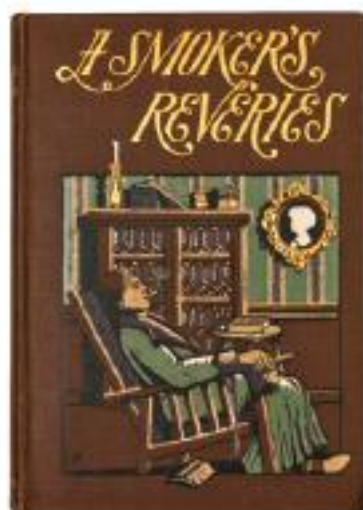
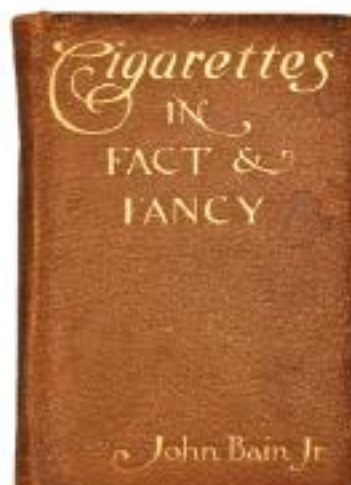


THE SMOKER'S LIBRARY

A Unique Gift for Whist or Euchre Prize

Tobacco in Song and Story
Tobacco Leaves
My Lady Nicotine
Pipe and Pouch

Bound in uniform style in Havana colored one calf cushion covers, gift top. The four volumes boxed in a cedar box with labels, marks, etc., as on a cigar box. Price, \$7.50



Edition" and "Smoker's Library" specialty items, however, dropped by the wayside the following year. Then in 1917, the company brought out new cloth editions of these books (except for *Bath Robes and Bachelors*), but gone were the pictorial covers. The

Caldwell titles were last offered in 1923. Finally the end had come for this exceptional group of books and in a decade that saw a definite decline in the popularity and publication of such pro-tobacco literature.

So, there they are, seven titles that

offer the very best that has been written about the enjoyment of tobacco in all its forms (including the quid and pinch of snuff), from the famous—Thackeray, Lamb, et al.—to those only identified as "Anonymous." If additionally the pipe smoker seeks out the variant bindings and specialty items, he will have an even more impressive bookshelf in his smoker's den. There will be challenges in acquiring these books in their original format, primarily issues of condition (frontispiece or bookmark missing? hinges cracked?), along with the relative rarity of those enclosed in imitation cigar boxes. But then, isn't the chase part of the fun, whether it's the "Holiday Edition" of *Tobacco in Song & Story* and *Bath Robes and Bachelors* or the Barling King, Dunhill Magnum or Castello Collection Great Line Fiammata 4K that you have been seeking to these many years?

Given the current antismoking environment, which promises to only worsen in the years to come, it is hard to imagine an earlier age—at the turn of the 20th century—when not only was smoking socially acceptable, but pro-smoking literature was widely popular. H.M. Caldwell Co. was the leader in not only publishing a series of tobacco titles dear to the hearts of those smokers who appreciate works of prose, poetry and song, but also by creating attractive formats and distinctive packaging for those very books that, without doubt, continue to appeal to "the man who smokes."

Once the pipe smoker lights up a favorite briar and peruses the contents of any of these books, I believe there will be genuine agreement with Bain's observation in *Tobacco Leaves* that "No other product has so pronounced a place, so definite a claim upon the thoughts and feelings of the human race as tobacco. There is—as every smoker knows—a reflective fragrance, a certain sentiment in the use of this weed that cannot be applied to any other blessing of nature connected with our existence." May that "reflective fragrance" also include a whiff of an old tome that complements the smoker's pipe, tobacco or even cigar! P&T



Emerging flavors

There was not a huge flow of responses to the first *Pipefuls* column. In fact, the flow consisted of a single missive asking what it was about. Well, it is about everything and nothing in particular. It is about the sorts of things one talks about at pipe club meetings, which covers all things kapnismological through cosmological. As well, I actively seek responses and thoughts from the erudite, cultivated readers of *P&T* (there is no other kind). Perhaps the first go-round, as there was no specific way to respond, made it difficult other than to shrug and keep one's thoughts to one's self. I was asking about great palates you have known, and I will keep the floor open regarding that topic, having opined at length about the greatly missed Bob Runowski. This time, I wanted to talk a bit about slow smoking. So, your thoughts, experiences and opinions are solicited, and you may respond this time by mail to me via the magazine's august editor, Chuck Stanion, or my new email address for this purpose and this alone: wserad@pipesandtobaccomagazine.com.

Vernon Vig, esquire (ret.), noted New York pipeman, first came to a slow-smoking contest in Dijon, France, in 2000. When he saw how much fun it was to take part, he was moved to form the United Pipe Clubs of America (UPCA) to support these kinds of activities. "It is a vehicle to get pipe smokers together and have fun with it," Vernon noted

to me. Certainly the fun aspect is hard to argue against, and I'm for anything that supports the brotherhood of the briar. Personhood would be more politically correct though not as euphonious, but that is really what I mean, so forgive me.

... my pipe, with continuous and unabated attention, decided to go out, placing me in the middle of the pack in the competition and high on the scorn list.

I came across the slow-smoking process as a goal at what I believe was the first official slow-smoking contest in America sponsored by the UPCA, held in Philadelphia. Unlike most competitive sports, where highest speed is the objective, pipe smoking contests have as the objective keeping your pipe going as long as possible with the same amount and type of tobacco as everyone else competing, and being able to produce appreciable smoke for a judge at any given moment. There are other rules, but it comes down to the pipe smoker having the greatest control over a single bowl winning. Aside from not considering pipe smoking a proper competitive sport in my heart

of hearts because it goes against the very nature of the brotherhood of the briar, reducing the speed to make a hummingbird function in geologic time is very much like the optimum state achieved with a great bowl of tobacco, so I am clearly conflicted and of two minds.

On this one and only occasion where I participated, the usual ritual of grinding the tobacco in the palms to chunky dust onto a sheet of paper was carried out, and the official tamper was a Tsuge-stamped dowel that I still use years later. The official two matches were given out, along with a very nice Kaywoodie, and the blend was Cornell & Diehl's Competition Blend, made for the occasion. I was too busy blabbing to a man from the Poconos on my right and Antoni Pascual (noted global pipe-function gadabout and Barcelona lawyer) on my left, with whom I practiced my Spanish and he practiced pretending I could still speak it. After we were puffing ever so slowly away, dabbing at the paper with the tamper, he thought some psychological warfare in order, and he put down his pipe and went to the bathroom. When he came back he picked up his pipe and resumed puffing in what was clearly a practiced move to amaze and demoralize the rest of the smokers. I laughed, perhaps too much, because my pipe, with continuous and unabated attention, chose that moment to go out, placing me in the middle of the pack in the competition

... slowing it down to the point of nearly going out, and sustaining that pace, causes myriad flavors, mostly dark, to dance on the palate.

and high on the scorn list. I identified my out-ness to a judge to memorialize what I wanted forgotten, and sat watching the mushroom cloud rise in the room above the silently entranced participants. Toni won.

As a complete digression, I had occasion at one of the Chicagoland pipe shows to use my heavily rusted Spanish skills in a whisper down the lane exercise of amity. The president of the Pipe Club of France wanted to exchange articles with this eminent publication, as they have their own magazine (in French). He did not speak English, and the equally eminent editor of *P&T* did not speak French. What to do? Monsieur le Président spoke to Toni in French, who spoke to me in Spanish; I in turn spoke to Chuck in English, and then responses went back the other way. It seemed to go adequately well, but I am convinced that the present Spanish economic difficulties were in some way caused by my translation of some seemingly innocuous phrase.

However, I made a discovery that continues to have benefits to this day. I discovered that a way to get a tobacco to "work" in many cases is to reduce the speed of puffing to that of a glacier's movement. Completely new characteristics hidden are revealed, and compelling, delicate flavors emerge where none were apparent at normal speeds. I will admit that I try things while traveling in my car, and traffic and agitation can increase rather than decrease my puff rate. This is highly undesirable. As well, I have experimented with different ways of packing, and I am sure you all know of those that have assumed names honoring their documenters, but nothing under the sun is really new. I have even used nut grinders and food processors on flakes, as well as drug and spice paraphernalia to take thick flakes and turn them into much smaller pieces. I am fond of putting big slabs or chunks into

the bottom, then broken pieces, then next to tobacco dust on top to get the right burn. But the real finding is reducing the rate as far as possible. I still have a large pipe collection that I use in trying to match the pipe to the leaf so the results are perfect, but a monastery or back porch where, undisturbed, one can achieve the slowest burn has produced some revelations.

I have several examples where remarkable flavors have emerged under slow and tender ministrations of fire. Take, for example, the well-known Mac Baren Mixture. It has been described as honey on toast to some, and many wax poetic relating the room note, never much of a concern to me. I have tried every two years without fail to get it to work for me. I acknowledge that there are some blends that simply don't agree with an individual's body chemistry and will never ring the bell for him. However, I felt the quest for Mixture was indicated because of the sheer number of fans in the pipe world, many of whom I respect deeply. So, every two years I buy a tin and have another go at the new one and with its antecedents, so I can try some with some age. This has gone on so long that some of the tins are practically due for a gold watch and retirement. I must say that I cannot but admire the quality of the leaf and Mac Baren's ability to produce blends that have virtually no variation over long periods of time. This is very difficult to do given the challenges of obtaining leaf of the same caliber and flavor year after year. Some blenders make variations work to their advantage by small batch issues, like the superlative McClelland's Christmas Cheer. But, generally, variations are undesirable. However, I decided to have a slow smoke go at Mixture, first in a Kirsten and then in some non-system pipes. Lo, and behold! Rather than incinerating my faculty for taste, there came to me the fabled

honey on toast! I must also add that one needs to go through at least a whole tin to start, smoking nothing else, with at least several bowls a day. But smoking it that slowly, so slowly that a single bowl lasts seemingly forever and you are in a trancelike state, brings out flavors of a subtlety and richness I would never have thought hidden there, despite innumerable past experiments with changing conditions and pipes.

Aside from C&D's Competition Blend, another example of this is their Scanlish. It is, for all intents and purposes, a very usual blend in the list of ingredients. As well, the tin aroma is unremarkable and the appearance is commonplace. It tends toward the middle browns to the black of the Latakia. There is no reason to assume that it is anything but usual. And, if puffed in a distracted and usual way, it is usual. However, slowing it down to the point of nearly going out, and sustaining that pace, causes myriad flavors, mostly dark, to dance on the palate. New delights are found where none were expected.

I believe that McClelland has several blends that are overlooked by most people. The catalog is so extensive, and there are so many offerings that dazzle the gustatory senses, that these are often overlooked. One is an older blend, Dominican Glory Maduro. It is a flake and most find it to be very nice, but there is not much in the way of effusive praise in private discussions, discussion boards or reviews and the like. However, I have found a world of luscious flavors in it that would remain undetected by my normal rate of consumption. Grinding it in the palms and tamping it fairly tightly, making sure to toast the top of the bowl a bit before puffing to get the coolest of lights, I find wonderful and dark flavors, not made muddy by complexity, that flow serenely over each other like tidal lapping on the

Dominican shores. I am not the biggest of cigar fans and have narrow tastes in that direction not easily met, but this wonderful marriage of maduro with Virginias is magnificent when treated with the respect it deserves. Another is Grey Havens, a rather different combination of matured Virginias, white Burley and Perique in McClelland's Craftsby Series. The Grey Havens stood near the mouth of the River Lhûn at the gulf's eastern end in J.R.R. Tolkien's works. This blend stands in a very neutral area tastewise, but when puffed slowly, it opens up to show dalliances of flavors hidden by more agitated puffing. This blend is often overlooked, but the more I come back to it, the more I find there with the proper, slow ministrations. The white Burley gives it a unique creamy taste and mouth feel not found in even the best Va-Per flakes, but this is spun out and requires no particular pretreatment. The Virginias are of the expected McClelland quality, but there is something here that is unusual and to be savored in solitude and quiet reflection slowly, ever so slowly, and well.

Another blend I never quite got is Dunhill Royal Yacht, which certainly has a following. I tried it in the U.S. several times and bought some while in England, thinking the Royal Yacht might sail better over there, but it sank on both sides of the Atlantic.

It was always hot and had a head bang from big Nic, and, while not flavorless, it possessed a flavor that I would not seek out, though it does elicit some compliments about the room note. With a lot of effort and the right pipe it was OK. But, when smoking it ever so slowly, a whole new range of flavors emerged, flavors that I do enjoy, without the heat and the unpleasantness. It can easily

A world of complex flavors bloomed from each bowl. The aromas were as different as the tastes.

become a constant companion when treated with the time due to a good friend and not a casual acquaintance.

A flake that made me green upon our first encounter is Samuel Gawith's 1792, which I made the mistake of trying during my long drive to work. I had to pull over to recover, thinking it the strongest thing I had ever tried. But there was something about it that seemed to make me want to experiment enough to bring out the good and leave behind the reckless driving possibilities. I finally found that the smallest bowls (the smallest quarter-bent Kirsten with

the smallest Haida bowl (no longer made) and a straight Peterson system, where the bowl is somewhat truncated in depth to make a chamber below it for an extension to the stem) were the keys to avoiding a dizzying experience. But when I pulverized the flakes, changed the rate to the slowest possible—which inherently meant not in the car—then a world of complex flavors bloomed from each bowl. The aromas were as different as the tastes. What had been a near traffic accident became pure enjoyment, flavors so winning I always keep some around for special introspective moments.

I could go on, but you probably have your own list of blends people recommend in which you found nothing interesting, blends you wanted to like but couldn't, blends you just didn't fathom or couldn't get to work for you. This is just a suggestion about how you might unlock the hidden virtues that elude you. Write to me about any similar experiences or the results of your own experimentation.

In coming issues I would like to touch on Burley and those who love it as well as the obsession of collecting. While these sound more like daytime TV topics, they will be treated with all dignity. Please write! Let me know of any interests you may have that would benefit a public forum. P&T

Doctor of Pipes Award recipients

We would like to join the Chicagoland International Pipe and Tobacciana Exposition in congratulating the two newest recipients of the respected Doctor of Pipes Award, conferred in May of this year to collector Tad Gage and to Mike McNiel of McClelland Tobacco. Both gentlemen are enthusiasts with decades of participation in our fine hobby and are well deserving of this recognition.

	Industry	Hobby
1998	Tom Dunn	Frank Burla
1999	Barry Levin	Basil Sullivan
2000	Chuck Levi	Ed Lehman
2001	Bob Hamlin	Rich Esserman
2002	Mary McNiel	Chuck Rio
2003	Peter Stokkebye	Linwood Hines
2004	R. David Field	Ben Rapaport
2005	Mike Butera	Rick Newcombe
2006	Marty Pulvers	Mike Reschke
2007	Tom McCranie	Frederico Baylaender
2008	Alberto Bonfiglioli	T. Gibb Robinson
2009	William John Ashton-Taylor	Fred Janusek
2010	Alan Schwartz	Fred Hanna
2011	Paul Creasy	John Eells
2012	Mike McNiel	Tad Gage

The pleasures of pipes

Peter Heeschen is grateful for all that pipemaking has given to him

Danish pipemaker Peter Heeschen is a popular presence at pipe shows. He is easily approachable and enjoys talking to anyone who is near. Favorite topics of conversation for the soft-spoken Heeschen include fishing, travel and, of course, pipe-making, often over a glass of wine or a bottle of beer while enjoying a pipe. He's easily recognizable, with his long brown and gray mustache that extends approximately an inch beyond the corners of his mouth and is sometimes twisted at the end in

an almost handlebar fashion, and a loaded pipe or two stuffed into his shirt pocket to replace the pipe that is almost always clenched between his teeth.

Just as recognizable at the shows are Heeschen's pipes. His signature "P" shape—a pipe that features a very slight bend, has a rounded bowl that is canted forward and a uniquely shaped stepped stem—can be identified across the room. Then there are the squat bulldogs, Dublins, eggs and cherry wood pipe shapes that

Heeschen has also transformed into styles easily recognizable as his own.

With so many familiar shapes connected to the Heeschen name, the humble Dane's reputation is on par with many of the world's greatest pipemakers, whose pipes fetch thousands of dollars, yet Heeschen's pipes rarely retail for more than \$1,300. While he makes world-class pipes recognized for both their beauty and smoking qualities, Heeschen has streamlined his pipemaking techniques and mastered the art of repetition on those signature shapes so he can offer them at prices that allow more people the opportunity to enjoy his work.

"I want to keep my pipes at a certain point so that they are more accessible to as many smokers as possible," he says inside the comfortable workshop at his farm in Holmstrup, Denmark, a few miles from the city of Odense. "I'd rather see somebody enjoy my pipes than see them sitting on a shelf. So long as I can earn a living, that's OK."

Heeschen doesn't want it known just how fast he can churn out a pipe, but rest assured, if pipemaking were a speed competition, Heeschen would be a multiple world champion. Like any champion, however, Heeschen's fast pipemaking skills come from years of practice—mastering the skills and perfecting



the shapes—and from hours of preparation, evidenced by the dozens of mouthpieces in his shop he has already cut and shaped to fit onto a block once he begins making a pipe. In fact, Heeschen's workshop is a model of efficiency and cleanliness. It's a workshop a person might actually consider eating in without fear of mixing his food with ample bites of sawdust or picking Ebonite from his teeth.

The workshop is located across a small cobblestone courtyard behind his farmhouse, which was built in approximately 1900. A two-tier door opens into the large and comfortable L-shaped workspace, which Heeschen has divided into two areas. To the left of the entrance is a big desk on which papers, pencils and briar blocks are strewn. Heeschen jokingly calls this section his department of design. Underneath the table is a pile of briar blocks, each block ready to have a shape sketched onto it to begin the Heeschen pipemaking process. On the walls are shelves containing dozens of tobacco tins—many of them at least eight years old. On one wall in this area is a cabinet containing pipes Heeschen has acquired throughout the years. And then there are the various souvenirs of his travels, including a prized photo of Heeschen on a boat in Hawaii proudly showing off the more than 130-pound marlin he caught on his second around-the-world journey—opportunities that have come only since Heeschen has taken up pipemaking.

"I love the freedom of being a pipemaker," Heeschen explains. "I love the opportunity to travel too. For the Richmond show in 2009, I came to the U.S. a week before and went down to Key West, where I visited Joe's Bar and [Ernest] Hemingway's house. It was very interesting. I was a fan of Hemingway a long time ago. It was very interesting to hear the stories about him and see his fishing trophies. I have decided that every time I go to a show, I will have some fun in connection with that show."

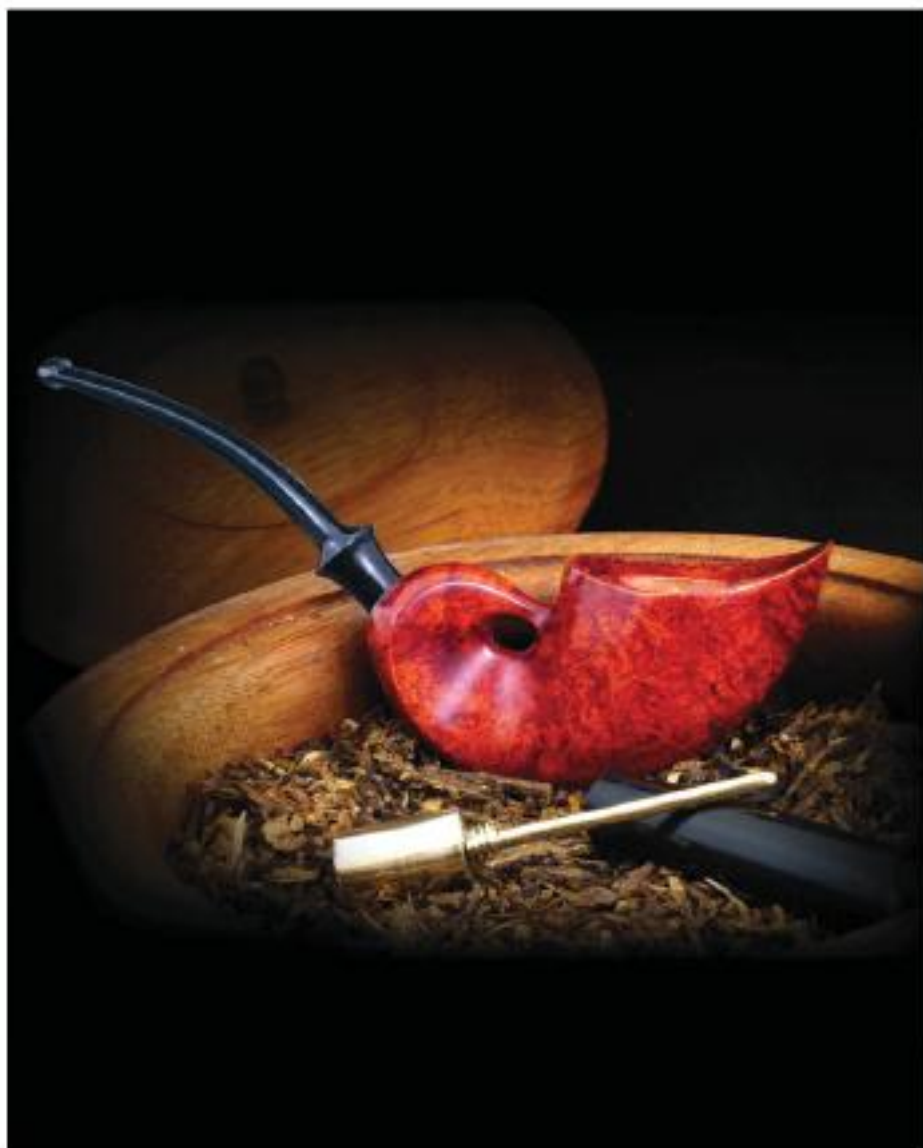
And then there was the trip that allowed Heeschen to feel a little bit like his one-time literary hero



Photo courtesy of smokingpipes.com



Photo courtesy of smokingpipes.com





Hemingway. "There are a lot of nice people in the pipe world, and that's what I enjoy about it," Heeschen relates. "One year Tonni Nielsen and I were in Japan, and we laughed that we were just two small Danish red-necks who were cutting wood in a tobacco shop in Japan. Then I had to go to the Richmond show. My travel agent suggested that I could travel all around the world if I added one more destination, so I went to Hawaii. While I was there, I met a friend who is a captain of a charter fishing boat. Catching that marlin was a once-in-a-lifetime thrill, and it happened to me because I am a pipemaker. The pipe world has changed quite a lot in the last 20 years. There used to be so many big pipe factories and the individual pipemakers weren't known. Now, thanks to the Internet, the pipemakers who gained their knowledge in those factories are now able to make a living independently."

Heeschen came to pipemaking after watching his father make a pipe in their basement workshop when he was 17 years old. He was an apprentice tool and die maker and was good with his hands, and like most teenage sons, the younger Heeschen thought he could do better than his father. He visited the W.O. Larsen factory and talked for a while with Hans "Former" Nielsen and then made a pipe. The result was better than what his father had accomplished, and Heeschen became a hobbyist pipemaker.

Heeschen bought a tool and die business and worked on his farm until 1980, when he decided to make pipes more professionally. He sold these pipes mainly in the German market, but marital problems and his youngest son's heart condition prevented him from putting a full effort into pipemaking. Heeschen learned all he could about his son's medical problems and stayed home to take care of him. Though the condition was a fatal one, the child appeared to be doing well, and a friend approached Heeschen about joining a project to help troubled youth find employment after serving prison terms. Heeschen accepted.

"That's how I became a social

worker," Heeschen explains. "I helped former criminals rehabilitate and return to society with jobs. I tried to do it anyway. I did that about 20 years. In the beginning I enjoyed the work, but it eventually wore on me. I started idealistic to help people and then I realized that not everyone wanted the help. In that project I ended up as a leader with about 15 employees. For some reason I did not get what I wanted so I quit. A day later I had another job in social work, this time working with the biggest criminals. I stayed there eight years. At that time I was 53 and I didn't want to be a social worker anymore, so I thought pipemaking would be interesting again."

With his experience as a tool and die maker, he had most of the tools that he needed. The difficult part was to make the contacts necessary to sell his pipes. He traveled to all the shops in Denmark and Germany and sold a few pipes here and there. While he enjoyed visiting the shops, it meant he was spending too much time away from home. By 2000, he noticed that almost all the pipe shops he visited had websites and were selling their pipes online. He decided to get his own website.

"I was amazed at how quickly my pipes sold on my own website," Heeschen explains. "I sold four times as many pipes. I remember the very first time I had pipes on my website. I put 14 pipes on the website and they were gone within 24 hours."

The demand for Heeschen's pipes grew throughout the years, and pipe-making took up more of his time. There was travel to various shows around the world and then there was the failing health of his second wife. Heeschen made the decision to spend less time making pipes. He now makes approximately 300 pipes a year, almost all of which are sold to retail shops in the United States, China, Japan and Italy.

"People can buy my pipes online," he says. "I also take special orders, but only if I like the shape. There have been some pretty crazy requests I have received. Sometimes when you sell directly there has to be a lot of communication with the custom-

er. I'm not always at my computer, so I find it easier to sell my pipes to shops. Mostly I sell to shops such as Smokingpipes.com, Neat Pipes and Al Pascia."

Heeschen is especially impressed with the Chinese market. He relates a story about a trip to Beijing, where construction crews worked around the clock on high-rise buildings near his hotel. From the time he went to bed to the time he arose, each of those buildings had risen several more stories. He sees similar growth not only in the number of Chinese people smoking pipes but also in their knowledge about pipes and pipe smoking.

"The Chinese want lots of pipes," he says. "There are some very rich people who are buying pipes, and they're smoking them too. Pipes are not just a status symbol anymore. Retailers there are doing a very good job showing people how to smoke a pipe. I once saw a shop owner spend an hour with a customer to show him how to smoke a pipe, which is really good."

The production portion of Heeschen's workshop is kept as neat as the pipe design area. Also just

like the other area, the walls here feature shelving that holds more tins of aged tobacco, including many of Heeschen's own pipe tobacco blend, Briar Fox, made for him by Cornell & Diehl in Morganton, N.C., another place that Heeschen has visited.

A lathe is placed along each of the three walls in the production studio. There's Heeschen's old lathe, which he has used for more than 40 years, on the left wall, for doing the basic drilling for the wood. Then there's a smaller lathe on the wall opposite the entrance that Heeschen uses almost exclusively for making mouthpieces. The third lathe sits beneath a window on the right side of the shop. Heeschen uses it exclusively for specialty work on adornments such as bamboo, ivory, silver and exotic wood rings.

Heeschen almost scoffs when he discusses the traditional divide of pipe carving—freehand versus classic. These differences, he says, can cause a pipemaker to lose focus on what's really important—making a good smoking pipe.

"I make pipes for smoking, not that much for display," he explains. "I don't make many fancy pipes. The



Photo courtesy of smokingpipes.com



fanciest pipe I make is the snail. I have my P shape, which is named after my first initial. It's a very simple shape. Its bowl is canted forward a bit. There's a nice little bow in the shank. It's a great smoking pipe. My most expensive pipe was \$3,000. I usually don't price a pipe like that though, but it had really nice grain. The thing I like about my pipes though is that people know it's a Heeschen pipe because I have my own style; it's not a fancy style, it's a pipe for smoking."

Heeschen exclusively uses Calabrian plateau briar from a supplier he has been working with for years. The supplier sets aside blocks that he thinks Heeschen will want, and once there is enough to fill a bag, about 150 blocks, he calls Heeschen. Heeschen trusts his supplier so much that he always tells him to send what he has. Once the briar arrives, Heeschen sorts it by quality and by the moisture content in each block. On average, the wood sits inside his workshop for three years before it's ready to be made into a pipe.

When Heeschen selects a block to use, he makes a couple of exploratory cuts to see how the grain progresses a few millimeters below the block's surface. He then chooses what shape will be the best for that block and then chucks it into the lathe according to a template, depending on what shape he is making and whether the pipe will be a straight grain or a cross grain.

He then drills the tobacco chamber, making just the smallest bore with the drill bit, which he then extracts, boring the rest of the hole by hand using a knife because he believes it's more accurate. After he forms the shank and drills the draft hole, Heeschen selects one of the mouthpieces that he has already hand-cut to fit the pipe. The pipe is now ready for sanding.

The quick work might lead some people to make the mistake of thinking that Heeschen's pipes aren't well made. However, his pipes are made with exacting engineering standards.

"People say that my pipes smoke excellent from the very first bowl and that they are very open in the draft," he says. "I always sand inside

the mouthpiece and shank so that there are never any sharp edges that can cause turbulence in the smoke, which causes moisture. The draft hole must meet the tobacco chamber at the bottom of the pipe. The draft hole is drilled to 4 mm and then tapers down to 2.5 mm at the mouthpiece's end. All my tenons are made of Delrin to prevent breakage, and I always leave 0.75 mm between the mortise and tenon to also prevent turbulence and to allow the wood some room for expansion while the pipe is smoked."

Starting with 40-grit sandpaper and using both a disc sander and a belt sander, Heeschen removes layers of wood, checking the pipe constantly for flaws. Once he is finished, he sits down at the table in the other portion of his workshop and grades the pipe.

He uses a very simple grading system for his pipes—they are smooth, sandblasted or wood for the fireplace. The S grade is Heeschen's highest grade and sells for more than \$650 for smooth pipes and more than \$500 for sandblasts. Of the 300 pipes Heeschen makes every year, he estimates only 10 are graded S. The smooth A grade has a few spots and a very nice grain. Smooth B grades have more spots and weaker grain. The sandblast A has a more difficult shape and a better blast. Sandblast B pipes have average grain.

"To sandblast, the briar has some small pits. If there are larger ones, then it will fuel my fireplace. Sandblasted S have very nice grain to them, and they have a natural finish without any staining."

Heeschen completes the pipe by staining it according to grade—higher-grade pipes receive lighter finishes. Once the staining is completed, Heeschen stamps his stylized "P." initial, "Handmade in Denmark" and the grade into the wood. And then it's time for Heeschen to sit back and contemplate the next project or travel opportunity.

"Pipemaking is such a demanding business," he says and laughs. "It's crazy but I feel very grateful for the opportunity to have all these experiences and meet all the nice people. It's only happened because I am a pipemaker. It's really quite a pleasure." P&T



Photo courtesy of smokingpipes.com

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Fare thee well, sweet Anna Liffey

It was not a four-letter word. It was more than twice as long as a four-letter word. It was not used in a sentence.

It shot with percussive force from the lips of Simone LaCroix. Her lips that Monday afternoon were outlined in a newly purchased shade of crimson called "French Kiss."

Eight reporters, two photographers, one editor and a newspaper publisher heard the word as they sat around a conference table of undistinguished blond laminate on the third floor of the *Standard Times*, the newspaper of record in Mill River, Mass.

Jack Dupont, the *Standard Times* columnist, looked sagely into the bowl of the empty Peterson bulldog he cradled in his hands. It was one of Dupont's tricks at meetings. As the meeting began, he would pull a pipe from the inside pocket of his sport coat. While the editor, publisher or visiting corporate "expert" wheezed

on, Dupont would remove the stem from the pipe and blow through it gently. He would then reattach the stem and hold the pipe up to his right eye, closing the left and making minute adjustments until the stem was perfectly straight. Sometimes, he would hold the pipe up to his ear.

"Keeps me from having to look anybody in the eye," he told Simone, a fellow reporter and his girlfriend of three years.

"Once, in a meeting, I looked up just when Cassie was calling the reporters, 'our newsroom family,'" he told Simone. "I snickered, out loud, and she made me work every Saturday night for the next three months."

Cassie Wolfson was the paper's city editor, a woman Dupont once said "couldn't run a newspaper if the instructions were printed on the side of the building it came in."

Simone hadn't so much said the dirty word as she had spit it.

"Ya hear about that," *Standard Times* photographer Pancho Souza had said after the meeting. "People say, 'just spit it out.'"

"But Simone really did spit it out, the way you'd spit out a mouthful of coffee if you saw a dead mouse at the bottom of the cup," he said.

Staff meetings were frequent in the *Standard Times* newsroom. Twenty years ago, the paper's circulation had been 25,000 a day. By 2011, only 14,000 Mill Riverites bought the paper. Meetings were held often to announce layoffs, pay cuts, furloughs and buyouts.

The meeting at which Simone spat out the saloon word was held to announce that, after 140 years, the *Standard Times* would no longer be printed in the building. The printing would be subbed out to a larger, unaffiliated newspaper 30 miles away. As a result, 42 of the paper's 215 employees would be laid off.

In Mill River, a decaying former

cotton mill city of 88,000, the unemployment rate was 17.2 percent. Mill Riverites watched the unemployment rate the way Kansans watched tornado news.

"This reduction in force will impact some valued members of our *Standard Times* family," the publisher had said. "But, at the end of the day, it will enable us to transition into a modern multimedia company focused on community journalism and providing unique proprietary content to our loyal readers."

The publisher, who drove a Mercedes and sat on the board of the Mill River Chamber of Commerce, lived 50 miles from Mill River and had never spent a night in the city.

The *Standard Times* staffers in the meeting, beginning to breathe again after realizing the layoff would not hit them, simply ignored Simone's outburst, as did Cassie and the publisher. Cassie asked Simone to stay after the meeting.

"That word's what did it," is how Simone explained her outburst to Cassie. "He said 'impact.'"

"He fired 42 people who live in a city where there's no work and he couldn't even say 'fired,' he said 'impact,'" Simone told Cassie before retreating to the ladies' room, where she sat in a stall, black capri pants and red lace panties around her slim, pale ankles, smoking a forbidden cigarette.

Jack Dupont and Simone LaCroix were reporters, Mill River natives whose grandparents had been among the exploited when 97 cotton mills hummed in the city. They were, as the clinical modern phrase runs, "in a relationship."

Dupont was 52. Simone was 40. He had worked for the *Standard Times* for 20 years. Simone had 13 years of her life in the old red brick newspaper building that sat like a blood clot over the artery of interstate that bisected Mill River's struggling downtown.

If Simone was angered by the *Standard Times* being printed elsewhere, Dupont was shattered.

"You don't hire someone else to print your paper," Dupont told Simone. "You hire someone else to

do your printing if you're a church newsletter in one of those towns that doesn't have a stoplight."

Dupont was tall, slim and inclined to walk with his head down. At 52, he no longer believed he was tough or irresistible to women. Behind his nicotine-stained light brown, push-broom mustache was a humorous, loose mouth. He dressed in tweed, wore a fedora every day of his life and kept a pipe in his mouth as a lance against the dragons of the modern world. His newsroom nickname was "Throwback." Dupont's column was 750 bullet words aimed at Mill River's grinding, poverty-producing injustices. When he wasn't mad, Dupont's column was a love letter to Mill River, its fogs and foibles, its weeping granite mills and bleeding red brick churches, its welfare mothers, unintelligible-to-people-from-60-miles-away local accent, its cops and its bars.

Simone was as blond as drugstore hair dye could make her, a small, sharp-nosed, pretty woman whose bright, tight wardrobe and love for what she called "kitties" obscured a lively intelligence, a full kit of reporter's tools and a graceful writing style.

"It's over," Dupont told Simone.

"What," Simone said.

"This," Dupont answered, waving a long hand at the *Standard Times* building.

The two stood outside on their afternoon break, Dupont puffing a short black pipe with a silver band, Simone dragging lazily on a long menthol cigarette.

While Dupont was more intuitive than Simone, she was smarter than he was and far more practical.

"It's the Internet, Jack," she said. "Nobody reads things printed on boring old paper anymore. The company has to dump the print edition within 10 years and go all Internet or they won't make it. They're always gonna need somebody to write the words. We're the words."

Weak February sunlight threw Dupont and Simone's shadows out into the *Standard Times*' parking lot.

"Twenty years ago, the *Standard* ran my first column," Dupont said.

"Page three. Monday. I drove down here at 3 a.m. That old guy that used to supervise the guys on the dock, Smokey Nasser, he's sittin' on the dock smokin' a cigarette and yelling at a truck driver."

"I said to him, 'Gimme two newspapers. My first column's in today,'"

"Smokey looks at me and he says, 'Ya want two newspapers, ya gimme a buck.'"

"That dollar bill never saw the circulation department," Dupont said, laughing.

"That's a cute story, Jack," Simone said. "Quirky characters, hard-as-nails city dialog and a young reporter bound for glory. Blah. Blah. Blah."

"The reason you hate this whole Internet thing is that you live in 1934," Simone said. "Well, you live with your mother in 1934."

Dupont winced slightly and scratched a white-tipped kitchen match on the brick wall of the newspaper building.

"Look at that match," Simone said. "Wooden. You wear a fedora, like Dick Freakin' Tracy. You carry a pocket watch and you wear a pinkie ring. You pay your rent in cash. You smoke a pipe. You drink a shot-and-beer. You call people 'Pal.' Fahgawdsakes, Jack, you still say 'broads.'"

"This is your eviction notice, Sweet," Simone said, touching Dupont's cheek with the tip of one lime-green fingernail. "They're stopping the presses for real, and you can't live in 1934 anymore. Time to move."

In line with his eviction notice, Dupont took Simone to a corporate-run steakhouse for dinner that night.

"I'll have a chardonnay," Simone told the barmaid, a young woman in a pink polo shirt with a name tag over her left breast and a button pinned over her right breast. The button read "Funzapoppin!" and was a promo for the steak joint's \$9.99 popcorn shrimp plate. Every employee wore a pink polo shirt, a name tag and the same button. Outside, just after dusk, sleet fell sideways on Mill River.

"Shot of Old Crow, Guinness chaser," Dupont said.

"We don't serve shots," the barmaid said. "Company policy."

Simone, slim legs wrapped twice around the legs of her bar stool, laughed, and Dupont heard a gentle breeze blowing through aspen trees.

"Don't look so horrified, Jack," Simone said. "They don't serve shots. It's not like you're in the hospital and they're telling you they ran out of plasma."

Simone handed Dupont a large cardboard folder labeled "Drink Menu."

"Find something," she said.

Dupont decided against the "Sweetah Margarita," which contained blueberry schnapps, and shuddered at the "Apple Turnover Martini."

"I'll have the Irish Coffee," he told the barmaid. "But I don't want the Bailey's Irish Cream in it. Just the Irish whiskey."

"All right," said the barmaid, starting to walk away.

"And I don't want it in a fancy glass, either," Dupont said. "Just put it in a coffee mug. And hold the whipped cream, the cherry and the green sugar sprinkles."

The barmaid, a pretty blond, abandoned her bored, yet perky, professional stance and giggled.

"So what you want is a cup of black coffee with a shot of Irish whiskey in it?" she asked.

"Yeah," Dupont said, his face crinkling in pleasure at having successfully communicated his desires to a 5-foot, 3-inch, 110-pound representative of America's corporate might.

"Did they just chip you out of an iceberg?" the barmaid said, giggling again.

Dupont squinted at the barmaid's name tag.

"Amber," he said. "If I come in here again, I'm gonna make sure I sit at your end of the bar."

"Thanks," Amber said. "Now, lemme get you folks your drinks."

"Folks," Dupont said to Simone. "We're 'folks?' Where are we? Nebraska? In 1910?"

The two ate at the bar. Simone had balsamic chicken breast with rice pilaf and snow peas. Dupont

had a steak, rare, a baked potato and corn. He did not eat the corn.

"So," Dupont said around a mouthful of partially chewed sirloin. "Today, Mikey Hirsch, the city hall guy? He tells me our beloved mayor, High Hopes Harrington, just appointed his cousin to the vacant janitor job up at the high school. Fourteen beans an hour to start, \$18 after four years."

Mayor Robert "Bob" Harrington was a rotund little thief with a chamber of commerce grin and several blue suits. He was in his second two-year term as Mill River's mayor. During his first term, while the city's unemployment rate had remained above 12 percent, he had hired his sister as registrar of voters, laid off 20 of the city's 160 cops and had all city vehicles emblazoned with his new city motto, "Pride City Wide." Harrington had used Frank Sinatra's "High Hopes" as his campaign song, causing Dupont to nickname him "High Hopes Harrington." The moniker spread from Dupont's column out into the city, causing much pain to Harrington, who envisioned a future in the statehouse.

"Isn't there a list for those jobs?" Simone said, slicing off a dime-sized piece of chicken, chewing it with no apparent jaw movement and then needlessly dabbing her chin with a napkin.

"Yeah," Dupont said. "But it's not Civil Service so the list doesn't mean anything. You apply, you're number 12 on the list. Three years later you're number one on the list and they hire a city councillor's uncle's barber's brother."

"You gonna write a column about Harrington and his cousin?" Simone said.

"Five, maybe six columns," Dupont said. "In 1934, newspapers used to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted. Time travel with me."

The next day at work, both Simone and Jack received an email inviting them to come down and watch the last press run, at 11 p.m., on the first Tuesday in March.

Simone said the many-lettered saloon word again.

"So," she said to Dupont. "Forty-two people get canned and we're supposed to come and watch? If they were shooting them all, there'd probably be an open bar."

"In a city occupied by 88,000 people living on Hamburger Helper and off-brand beer," Dupont wrote in his Monday column, "High Hopes Harrington conducted a nationwide search for a new high school custodian."

"After months of searching, reading resumes and interviewing, High Hopes found the perfect candidate sitting on a bar stool."

Week two's column was the biography of High Hope's cousin, his two arrests for driving while intoxicated, his domestic assault conviction and his dismal employment record.

Dupont dug deep.

"I found six employers who hired and fired High Hopes' cousin in the last eight years," Dupont wrote. "Confidentiality forbids those employers from telling me why cousin was fired, but six bosses thought they were better off with cousin on the outside of the building."

"If enough people tell you you're drunk, maybe you should take a nap," Dupont wrote.

It got worse. By week four, Dupont was writing a column in which a caricatured Harrington sang a version of "Danny Boy" to his cousin, who, alas, was named Daniel.

"Oh Danny Boy,

A job, a job you're getting
with lots of perks

from which you won't get fired.

There's other guys who on the list
are waiting

but Danny Boy, 'tis you who will
be hired."

In week five's column, Mayor Bob Harrington was pictured as "The Bobfather," a Mafia don.

Dupont pictured The Bobfather behind a huge desk, greeting those who came to seek favors.

"As you know," The Bobfather rasped, "no true politician can refuse a request from a drunken cousin on Election Day."

Mayor Harrington saw Dupont on the street as Dupont walked to the bank with his paycheck. ▶

"When that rag you work for finally folds, I'm gonna hire you as my driver and make you pick up my dry cleaning," Harrington said, standing very close to Dupont.

"Whattsamatter, Bob, you running out of cousins to hire?" Dupont responded.

"You're gonna have to let up on Harrington," managing editor Cassie Wolfson told Dupont. "The columns are becoming mean-spirited and they're way too negative."

"One more," Dupont said. "One more."

"One more," Cassie said. "Then, I want you to write one of those 'atmosphere' columns about an old man or an old church or dawn in the housing projects."

"I interviewed the guy who is number one on the custodian list," Dupont told Simone on a smoke break.

"He's 35. Been married 15 years. Got outta high school and went to work at Puritan Yarn. Laid off two years ago when it folded. Two kids. He's been working 20 hours a week at a vegetable farm in Rhode Island. In the summer he chops weeds with a short-handled hoe. Eight bucks an hour. In the winter he gets unemployment and they go to the food pantry at St. Anne's."

"What's his wife do?" Simone asked.

Jack lit a bulldog pipe with a kitchen match. He smiled broadly into the cloud of blue smoke that drifted into the cold air.

"Nothing," Dupont said. "She has cerebral palsy."

Simone slapped Dupont on his khaki-clad rear.

"Make 'em cry," she said.

The readers cried. Then, they got mad and called the mayor's office. Harrington's cousin quit the custodian job. The guy whose wife had cerebral palsy got a phone call telling him to report to the high school for work. Fourteen an hour and health insurance. He and his wife both cried.

On the night of the last press run, Simone LaCroix was on the 2-10 p.m. shift. The last run would begin at 11 p.m.

Dupont walked into the office at 10:15, nodded at Simone and sat at his desk, reading his email. He did not remove his brown fedora or his trench coat. He dripped rainwater on the floor around his desk and clenched an unlit Dunhill Dress billiard hard between his teeth. Done for the night, Simone read a novel about two people who lived in Paris and were achingly in love. There was glitter in Simone's eye makeup.

"It's 10:30," Dupont said, standing at Simone's desk. "Let's get a couple cups of coffee and watch 'em start the last run."

"I don't drink coffee at 10:30 at night and I don't drink newsroom coffee," Simone said. "The last time anyone cleaned that pot was the day before the day the music died."

"We'll get coffee," Dupont said. "The music's dying tonight."

At the coffee pot, Dupont half-filled two Styrofoam cups. Reaching into the right-hand pocket of his trench coat, he came out with a 1.5-ounce airplane bottle of coffee liqueur, which he added to Simone's cup. He dropped the empty in his left-hand coat pocket then repeated the process, adding the same amount of bourbon to his own cup.

"Oh ... coffee ..." Simone said, taking a microscopic sip and then brushing back her curly blond hair, each ringlet exactly the size of a dime. In a newsroom full of reporters in khaki pants and sensible footwear, Simone was wearing a floor-length dove gray skirt, a hot pink blouse and three-inch black high heels with a severely pointed toe.

The two went down to the basement in the *Standard Times*' rickety old freight elevator and stepped out into a low-ceilinged, granite-walled hallway that verged on being a tunnel. As they turned the first corner on their way to the pressroom, a slim, 20-year-old man with baggy jeans and a weedy mustache reached clumsily behind a pile of bundled grocery store flyers, trying to hide the 16-ounce can of Budweiser in his hand. The man was an inserter, one of the crew that ran the newspaper folding machines. He was working his last shift.

"Chill, Dougie," Dupont said. "No bosses here, but there's probably some behind us."

"No worries," said Dougie, retrieving the beer can and holding it out to Dupont.

"Naah," Dupont said. "Wake up and smell the coffee."

Dupont waved his whiskey-laced coffee under Dougie's nose.

Dougie smiled and scuttled away into the darkness behind the grocery store fliers.

Simone and Dupont stood in the cavernous pressroom, hearing the press roar, watching ear-plugged pressmen clamber over and sometimes into the huge blue machine. The room smelled like hot metal, oil and ink.

Cassie Wolfson, who had stayed late, stood next to Dupont. She wrinkled her nose.

"It's whiskey, Cassie," Dupont said. "I'm not on the clock and I'm watching the music die. It's whiskey."

Cassie locked eyes with Dupont and took the cup from his hand. She took a small sip and grimaced.

"It's the cheapest I could buy," Dupont said proudly.

No one stayed until the end of the run, which would come at 3 a.m. By 11:15, Dupont and Simone were standing on the gray sidewalk in front of the pressroom door, just under a dim light bulb trapped in a small metal cage.

Dupont scratched a wooden match with his thumbnail and lit his pipe. Across the waters of the Swansett River, white smoke rolled from the smokestacks of a coal-fired power plant.

"I'll meet you at your apartment in 10 minutes," he said to Simone.

"Nights together and nights apart, Jack," Simone said. "I think tonight is a night apart."

"That wouldn't be so easy to say if we were married," Dupont said, taking his pipe from his mouth and peering into the bowl.

Simone turned first her head, then her whole body toward Dupont.

"Don't say that to me," she said. "Don't say 'if we were married,' like you'd say 'Got a light?'"

"I'm not a 27-year-old waitress who thinks you're famous because you have a column in the local paper," she said. "You watch what you say to me."

The rain fell harder and Dupont turned his pipe bowl upside down.

"See ya tomorrow," Simone said, before walking to her car, drops of water shining on the backs of her shoes.

The St. James Irish Pub, a basement bar next to an abandoned church on a Mill River side street, was nearly empty on a rainy night too far from payday. The crowd was two heavyset young women talking about a man named Derek and the cavalier attitude with which he greeted a child support order.

"Forty freakin' bucks a week," one of the girls said.

"I know, Paula," the other responded in a tone of tequila-aided sadness. "I know."

"It's a Friends of the Friendless meeting over there," Tommy the bartender said. He had poured Dupont's Old Crow shot and Guinness chaser as soon as he saw him walk through the door.

"I thought girls liked it when you talked marriage," Dupont said to Tommy.

"They like it when you marry 'em," Tommy said. "That's what they like."

"Where the hell were you 20 minutes ago?" Dupont said.

"On the phone with my wife," Tommy said, moving down the bar and beginning to slice a lime. The tequila girls still had \$15 on the bar and Tommy had decided they'd need more lime wedges soon.

"If ya wanna lime wedge in that Guinness, just yell," he said to Dupont.

The jukebox in the St. James featured many Irish folk songs, some '70s and '80s rock, a little Sinatra and, at the request of Jack Dupont, a few songs sung in Cajun French.

Dupont was not Irish, had no interest in Irish culture, had never been to Ireland and was not planning to go to Ireland. Regular attendance at the St. James Irish Pub meant he had learned to drink Guinness and

he knew what song to play on the night the music died, the night he foolishly said "married" to Simone, the night he got his final eviction notice from 1934.

Dupont leaned forward, directing his gaze through the lower half of his bifocals, through the sadness-smudged Plexiglas of the jukebox until he could puzzle out the printing on a small cardboard card reading, "Dublin in the Rare Auld Times," by The Dubliners. Two quarters played the song.

Dupont made it back to his stool as the voice of now-deceased Dubliners' lead singer Ronnie Drew rose in one man's lament for a lost city, a lost job, a lost life.

"By trade I was a cooper, lost out to redundancy.

"Like my house that fell to progress, my trade's a memory."

Five blocks away, the press at the *Standard Times* rattled and shook through the last run. The first copies reached the insert room and slid through the folding machines.

Dupont pointed a finger at his shot glass, which Tommy refilled silently.

Eight blocks away, Simone LaCroix thought of Dupont as she rinsed a teacup in her small sink. She said the many-lettered saloon word again.

Drew's voice sounded like coal in a coffee grinder. Dupont sang along, only half under his breath.

"The years have made me bitter, the gargle dims my brain

'Cause Dublin keeps on changing & nothing stays the same."

Jack Dupont, who had heard the music for the last time, put his hat on his head and dropped three \$1 bills on the dented cherrywood bar. One of the tequila girls giggled.

"Go slow," said Tommy as Dupont walked stiff-legged toward the door, his teeth clenching the stem of his pipe until they ached. Dupont took the pipe out of his mouth and threw his head back, singing with Ronnie Drew.

"Fare thee well, sweet Anna Liffey, I can no longer stay." P&T

Marc Munroe Dion is a syndicated columnist and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize this year.

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Pipe revival

Being so good at what he does keeps Tim West busy

When a visitor walks downstairs to the basement workshop in Tim West's suburban Columbus home, it's immediately obvious just how much pipe repair work he has lined up. The incoming boxes from UPS and the Postal Service line one side of the steps in an orderly fashion.

"This is the way I sort—by date—the oldest date here," he explains from the bottom of the steps. "The ones just coming in are up there by the door."

West says that his wife, Carla, has become accustomed to living in his home workshop. And his cats, Max and Pearl, avoid contact with the pipes when they go up or down the steps and walk around his very cluttered but efficient shop.

The 12- to 14-week backlog is there even though West works a lot more than eight hours a day. Mornings are spent in the shop. Afternoons see him doing billing, shipping and returning phone calls and emails. After supper he's back downstairs in an attempt to catch up on the volume of work sent to him by pipe smokers and retailers who today have few other places to send their work.

"I can do 15 or 25 pipes a day if I am

really cranking. But they're coming in the door faster than I can get the work done."

West enjoys living near his hometown, just as many other pipe repair people opt to live where they want because their work follows them.

West gets his work from pipe smokers and retailers all over the country. "There are only about six shops in the U.S. doing repairs on my level. They're located in places they want to live, too—California, the Dakotas, Montana, Florida, Tennessee and Pennsylvania."

Rarely a smoker

Surprisingly, West smokes pipes only occasionally. "I don't generally have enough time to sit down and enjoy a pipe," he explains.

When he is smoking, it will most often be pipes he has made, even though he has more than 100 pipes he has collected for more than 40 years.

"Mostly if I'm smoking a pipe I'm probably smoking one of my pipes because I'm at a pipe collectors' show, and I'm with a bunch of people who kind of expect me to be smoking one of my pipes. But I do enjoy smoking other people's pipes that I've collected over the years."

His favorite tobaccos? J.F. Germain English types and Esoterica blends.

Even though he smokes very little when he's working, the aroma of pipe tobacco lurks in his shop and on his clothes at the end of the workday.

Began in high school

West's pipemaking began in his senior year of high school in Hilliard, just a few miles south of his present home. He graduated from Hilliard High School in 1968.

Making pipes was something of a necessity for West, since he wanted to smoke pipes but couldn't afford to buy the pipes he wanted. This was at a time, West admits, when he probably should have been doing his homework instead of making pipes in the basement of his parents' home.

West first became interested in pipes when he saw his best friend's father's enormous pipe collection. "He was a pipe smoker and his house was like a museum of Oriental collectible stuff and pipes.

"We also had Smokers' Haven here in Columbus, which was one of the largest smoke shops in the country at the time," with thousands of pipes and

a large variety of tobaccos.

"Mr. Ormerod had this really great GBD and Charatan collection of pipes and all kinds of other sculptured pipes—heads and animals, things like that, made by Marxman. His collection was very, very expensive. As a teenager I was just totally impressed. We were allowed to smoke with him at their kitchen table."

While teen smoking may not have been legal even at that time, "It was not that big a deal," West says. "We were opened up to good tobaccos from Smokers' Haven and good, well-made pipes."

"But I didn't have the money to buy the really expensive pipes downtown at Smokers' Haven."

"I decided I could probably make a pipe. Sid Ritter at Smokers' Haven sold me a block of briar and a couple of mouthpieces. I started working on a block of wood that was not predrilled. I had to do all the drillings and the stem mounting. And I ended up with a skull's head pipe—in the same vein as Mr. Ormerod's collection."

"I was interested in that kind of pipe. I carved a hand holding a bowl. Then I did a clown's head. And I made about three or four other smooth pipes before I quit making pipes and moved on to college."

West still has most pipes he carved in the late 1960s, except for that first skull pipe.

After college, West found himself married and fixing mechanical cash registers just as electronic cash registers

were coming of age. Then there was a gig with a band for a couple years. "We were just about ready to make it good and strong and successful when a couple of the guys joined the National Guard and the band broke up," he explains.

Needing something to do, West opened a small shop—about 100 square feet—in a place called Monkeys Retreat near the campus of The Ohio State University, and he started making pipes again while waiting for a job that never came along.

After five years at Monkeys Retreat, West moved to the mall in the Columbus Convention Center, where he opened Tim West Pipes and Tobaccos in 1980. He spent 11 years there selling cigars and tobaccos and his pipes along with other brands.

It was a good pipe store with cigars, he says, looking back. "One entire wall was covered with about 300 pipes. It was a pipe store because I was a pipe man."

West closed that store too early to enjoy the cigar boom of the mid-'90s. "If I had stuck it out for another couple years, it probably would have expanded into a much bigger cigar business," he admits now.

Today, West notes, most tobacco shops concentrate on cigars, with a small selection of pipe tobaccos and only a few pipes—basket pipes and low-end pipes because shop owners don't have to invest a lot of time or money in inventory.

"There was a time back in the day when fills were the norm. They didn't throw anything away. It wasn't all about quality briar. It was about the smoke, and the wood and the pipe shape as a tool. Today it is much different. Today there is a different standard for flaws and putty fills and the design of a pipe. Pipe quality has changed much over the years."

And, West adds, "Filled flaws have never made a pipe smoke bad."

"Human nature turns us off to imperfections. We're a society with perfect beliefs. Smokers today like pipe perfection. If it's not, then we look down on it." Still, West admits, "There's nothing better than to be working on a piece of briar or a pipe repair and see it come to perfection—just everything about the shape, the grain, the balance makes it all right."

"High-quality pipes have their place in a cigar and pipe shop. But the proprietor must understand and cultivate his clientele to a better smoking pipe so the customer will return to buy his pipe tobacco. Many of the cigars today sell for a very high price. The quality is justified for a better smoke. This is also true for pipes. A pipe smoker will have a better chance for a high-quality smoke with a better-made pipe and when he finds that favorite tobacco to put in it."

That perfection is what West tries to bring back to the old, often abused pipes he receives for repair. ▶

Before ...



... and after





"I'm not the guy who does repairs for the most expensive pipe collection. I enjoy working on the everyday pipes from the regular pipe smoker and his pipe collection.

"I'll work on Dunhills. I'll work on Castellos. I'll work on anything anyone sends me. But when someone starts asking about factory stems, well, I can do a really good close facsimile of the original stem. I'm not going to tell anyone it's a factory stem.

"There's only one guy in the country who can actually say he is using factory Dunhill stems. That's Howard Schulte, in Vero Beach, Fla. Howard is a second-generation pipe repairman."

West's work is highly recommended. Now 61, he says, "I'm one of the old guys. I used to be one of the young guys. I looked up to the old guys. There are very few of the old guys I knew who are still around."

West the repairman demonstrated his skill recently with a GBD he had in for a stem replacement. The bowl needed reaming. The stem was "cruddy. This smoker chewed it, put dimples in it and finally bit it off, or it was broken off. He was obviously smoking this after it was broken," he explains.

Like all of the other pipes that come in for repair, West first redrilled the draft hole and mortise to clean out all of the accumulated residue.

He uses a long 5/32-inch bit to ream most shanks. "You don't want to make the hole any bigger, but you do want to get it open."

Finally, after the draft hole is opened down to the briar, West explains, "A drill can do what a pipe cleaner cannot." Then the mortise is redrilled. All that "residue stuff" at the bottom of the mortise is removed. Now, he says, "this (the stem) will go in all the way.

"When pipes are sent for a repair for me to do, their favorite pipe goes back to them like it's brand new inside and out."

West does not make a practice of opening mouthpieces, even though it is a part of the repair business that has grown larger over the last 10 years or so.

"Jim Benjamin started a business opening up airways in pipes. We were sold on this new idea and it caught on very quickly. It helped my repair business because many bits needed to be replaced when the draft hole drilling broke through the mouthpiece surface and made it unusable."

Replacing mouthpieces or repairing them with a new tenon is a big part of West's repair business too. "Smokers often bite through stems. Today, thin is in. It's more comfortable. But the stem won't last as long." West said he even has customers who "seem to eat Lucite. A 3-inch stem can be sent to me and now it's only 2 inches long."

He suggests that "rubber is warmer, cushionier. And I think it smokes a little drier because it doesn't condense as much wetness.

"I tend to gravitate to rubber for its affordable cost. And most of the pipes coming in require rubber if they want the same material."

West admits, however, that it's not a question of if a rubber bit will oxidize, but how long it will be before it does oxidize.

Fitting the stem to the shank is something West says can't be done with a micrometer. "I just have to eyeball it and cut a little at a time until it fits with the proper tension," he explains as he takes a second try on the GBD until it feels just right.

With the stem in place, West slowly shapes the outside diameter of the mouthpiece to the shank. After a bit of



stain, buffing and polishing, the GBD looks better than it has probably looked since it came out of the box.

An average stem replacement and cleaning runs around \$25, West says, though some repairs take more time.

West notes that many of the pipes sent to him for sale on consignment, repair or cleaning "are pipes that only the owner of the pipe would call their own." He will do the work called for and the pipe will be returned in "like-new-again condition, waiting for more active duty until it's time again to be raised again into a loving rotation of heavenly smoke rings."

Selling consignment pipes on eBay is a facet of West's enterprise that keeps him busy too. He got started on eBay by listing his new and used pipe collection and buying other collections of used pipes—20 or 30 at a time—to clean up and resell individually. Now he works with just a few eBay consignment clients.

West has just one part-time employee, his son Brenden, who was born with cerebral palsy. With the aid of a caregiver, Brenden is able to take pictures of pipes and upload the listings for sale at Twestpipe on eBay.

For more than 20 years, West's stepfather, Jim Seman, helped him with repairs. Today Seman works strictly as a tool and die maker on the pipe tools and parts for the J.H. Lowe side of the business.

It is this kind of work that West is willing to teach anyone interested in pipe repair in his eight-hour classes. But, he notes, what he really teaches is encouragement. The skill is something that must be developed. West himself is self-taught.

"You can give them the basics for 'yeah, you can do it' in one eight-hour course. I've had guys come and learn with me for five days."

Repair is all-encompassing

Pipe "repair" covers a large broad area for West. One project he worked on over an eight- or nine-month period was a WDC pipe, made by William Demuth & Co. early in the 20th century—part of a set that included molded stems of athletics figures and screw-in pipe bowls that were turned or carved into a baseball, rugby ball or football.

The WDC project was done for Kevin O'Gara, 54, an avid sports memorabilia collector who lives on Long Island.

"Nobody has ever found a WDC baseball pipe with the ball still on it," West explains. It took him several attempts at designing the right ball, with stitching, before he came up with the right size and concept.

The ball had to be approximated since there was no known prototype. It was finally shaped to 1.5 inches in diameter on a lathe, with a flat top and screw-in bottom, and hand-carved stitching added.

West made several test bowls before finding the right size. And once he had the right size, he shaped several bowls from what he thought was good briar only to find unacceptable flaws when he was looking for perfection.

Due to the small size of the baseball, the tobacco chamber is only eleven-sixteenths of an inch in diameter, where three-quarters of an inch or thirteen-sixteenths of an inch is more common.

The WDC project is one that West particularly enjoyed—one in which he invested many more hours than he could charge for reasonably. "It was a special thing. It took time to plan and time to get it right in my head."

Kevin O'Gara says that time was well worth it to him, even though he is not a

smoker. "Tim did a great job. I couldn't have asked for anything more, even though it took so long."

The pipe was one O'Gara found on eBay for about \$400 last year. He more recently spent \$20 to buy another pipe at a flea market, because he liked the metalwork on it. He thinks it is probably twice as old as he is.

O'Gara has never smoked a pipe and says he has no intention of smoking either of his recent acquisitions. "But one day I'm sure when I sell it when I'm trying to pay off my kids' college tuition, somebody will be smoking it. But it won't be me."

West treats all his repairs with the same care he used in re-creating the baseball for the WDC pipe. There needs to be a lot of planning before the actual work begins, he explains, especially when working with something like a carved antique meerschaum. "You just look at these little guys cross-eyed and you've broken an arm or a feather or something off of this ornate little pipe, or the shank cracks or explodes when you're trying to take out a screw tenon."

West knows all this from experience.

Even when simply polishing a pipe with a high-speed wheel, "You always have to have a finger on the inside to hold on to a pipe. They tend to want to roll and fly across the room. Just like a martial artist defending from an attacker, the buffer will roll the pipe bowl right out of your hand and across the room." Of course, that technique is best left to professionals—a mistake while buffing a pipe with a finger or thumb inside the bowl can lead to a broken digit.

Make vs. repair

Largely because of the money, the majority of West's pipe business is in repairs, not in making pipes as much as he used to.

"Did I ever dream I'd be doing nothing but repairs at this age? No. I probably expected to be in semi-retirement making a few pipes a week and having a good time with our first grandchild." Josephine was born in September.

West says he will probably never retire, "Unless I can't do it any more."

"But will I always be a repairman?"

I'm not sure how much longer I'll be a repairman just because of my age. The need for pipe repair is growing fast. The Internet is making it grow by exposing pipe smokers to the few pipe repairmen still doing it today. Pipemaking is today the most popular side of the business. With so many more pipemakers and so few pipe repairmen, the repair business is a much more lucrative business to be in."

West acknowledges that he owes much of his business to the Internet—especially since he bought the J.H. Lowe pipe parts and supply business 2003.

When he acquired J.H. Lowe, the company had been promoting itself on the Internet for only about a year. The Web pages were formatted just like the decades-old paper catalog. West was quick to add new inventory, including a huge selection of briar and acrylic stems.

West buys his briar from Greece and says he has enough on hand to age and supply the business for about 10 years. The briar takes up one of his three storage units.

Since only one company, Giudici of Italy, is making quality hard rubber Ebonite bits—bits West can bend and shape reliably—West has to order in quantity and well in advance of his needs. As a result he warehouses a substantial quantity in a second unit.

A third facility is devoted mostly to pipe parts and pipemaking and pipe-repairing tools that he also sells.

West's biggest addition to the J.H. Lowe website was the pipe repair page that has become the number-one hit on Google when someone seeks "smoking pipe repairs" or "tobacco pipe parts." P&T



Tim West is listed as Twestpipe on eBay

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BY TAD GAGE AND JOE HARB

Trial by FIRE

Altadis (now a part of Imperial Tobacco) has been one of the stalwarts of support for pipe smokers and a point player in fighting antitobacco legislation and taxation. The company's selection of bulk and tinned tobacco is extensive. The Sutliff line of tinned pipe tobacco represents Altadis' effort to utilize its ability to obtain, age and process fine leaf to create top-grade blends with a kind of middle-of-the-road appeal. The Sutliff line presents smokers with easy-smoking tobaccos that are very approachable, and a few delivered some intriguing surprises. Joe and I agree that the Sutliff tobaccos are remarkably "fluffy," rather than "dense." This soft character makes it easy to pack them densely, but that temptation should be avoided if you want a cool, easy smoke. We also found that while the tobaccos were smokable right from the tin, a couple days of drying generally improved their smoking quality. Joe and I also felt the overly romanticized descriptions of the mixtures on the tins and the Sutliff website did these mixtures a great disservice, depriving smokers of a realistic assessment of the contents and flavor in favor of meaningless descriptions of historical events, laughable superlatives and associations with weird moments of pleasure few of us can relate to, like fox hunts and cruises down the Bosphorus Strait—yikes! Purple prose set aside, we found these to be approachable and interesting tobaccos worthy of more realistic examination.

Berkshire

GAGE: Visually, this appears to be a well-balanced medium ribbon of tans and deep brown. The mild tin aroma

delivers hints of Oriental leaf sweetness and smoky Latakia, promising a mild and pleasing English-style smoking experience. Easy lighting, it presents a very smooth profile with excellent balance between the Oriental and Latakia leaf, with hints of Virginia and Perique. No Latakia bomb this: The smoke is soft and smooth with no pronounced contribution from any of the tobaccos. I detected a light, almost herbal flavor with a hint of dry earth and thyme. A touch of welcome sweetness comes through from the Virginia leaf.

I enjoyed the long finish and pleasant aftertaste. From start to finish, in any size pipe, it delivered a steady, reliable burn and a clean white-ash finish. Interestingly, a very low nicotine content makes it a nice candidate for a long pause between relights (even hours) without telltale bitterness. So if you want a bowl you can puff, set aside and take up later with minimal negative taste impact, this is a great blend. What's especially appealing about Berkshire is that it truly is mild, but not bland.



Pipes

AND TOBACCOS

2012 PIPE OF THE YEAR

BY BRUCE WEAVER AND TODD JOHNSON

American pipe carvers Bruce Weaver and Todd Johnson have collaborated to make this year's *P&T* pipe of the year. You've read about them individually in the pages of *P&T* and seen photos of their remarkable pipes; now you have an opportunity to own a special-edition pipe crafted by them both.

See photos and descriptions of each available pipe on the *P&T* website (www.pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com); call 800.346.7469 ext. 238; or email customerservice@pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com.

HARB: Sutliff describes Berkshire on the label as a rich English mixture. The prime aroma in the tin is sweet and pungent, with the characters of the Oriental tobaccos and Latakia just above that of the Virginias and Perique. Once stoked and burning smoothly, all the tobacco types contributed to the overall flavor profile, but the Latakia emerged more prominently by mid-bowl, defining the character as more of a medium English blend. This makes it a nice blend when you want the pungency and complexity of an English blend without it being overwhelming. Berkshire may be attractive as a change-of-pace blend, as a blend to enjoy when the pipe smoker wants more flavor, or as an introduction to the flavors for which the English blends are known.

Sunrise Smoke

GAGE: As with so many blends, the marketing for this mixture seeks to ride the coattails of Dunhill's Early Morning Pipe as an appealing first smoke of the day. While it is most certainly not Early Morning Pipe in composition, it perhaps captures some of the spirit of a soothing blend with which to start the day. Aged Virginia, Turkish, steamed black Cavendish and Latakia offer up a spicy, honeyed aromatic tin aroma dominated by the Cavendish and Latakia. Classified as English in the lineup, it profiles as a light aromatic in my book—not for any top-coating, but simply because it is so mild and influenced by the steamed Cavendish. It is a pleasing mixture that is, indeed, a comfortable morning tobacco or anytime you don't want something too challenging. It's a nice way to enjoy a light Cavendish flavor without going all the way to the aromatic side. The flavor has hints of caramel from both the Cavendish and Virginia leaf, and it works very well with the light smoky spice of the Latakia. The sugary bright Virginia burns a trifle hot but is tempered with gentle smoking. I thought this worked particularly well as a short smoke in a small briar, accompanied by a mug of coffee. The short finish with a slightly acrid aftertaste is something of a downer. It's not a mixture I'd want to smoke as the piece de resistance after a fantas-

tic gourmet dinner, but as a kick-start to the day, even on an empty stomach, it's a fine selection.

HARB: This blend has a lavish aroma in the tin, with sweetness from Virginia and Oriental tobaccos, and the delicate topping of the Black Cavendish. A light touch of Latakia, barely noticeable in the aroma, rounds out the blend. Once stoked, I enjoyed the interplay between the Latakia and Orientals, which are balanced and harmonious. In the top half of the bowl, the Orientals were more prominent, but by mid-bowl, the pungency of the Latakia lifted the flavor level of the blend. The Burley adds a bit of body to the blend, but it is not overpowering. Sutliff touts Sunrise Smoke as a morning blend to wake up the taste buds, but some smokers may prefer to enjoy this medium English/Oriental blend in the afternoon or early evening.

Black Swan

GAGE: I have low expectations for an exclusive black Cavendish tobacco, which tends to smoke bitter, hot and slurpy. Black Swan busted the black Cavendish mold wide open. This intensely black, fluffy concoction combines small shreds of individual leaf and large pieces of flake—certainly black Cavendish to the nth degree. But the quality of the Burley in this mixture, combined with the steaming process Altadis uses and the spartan restraint in adding flavorings, makes this one of the finest black Cavendish blends I've had the pleasure to smoke.

The tin aroma is loaded with butter and chocolate, spiked by allspice. What's promising is that unlike many such dark Cavendish mixtures, it isn't goopy in the tin and readily falls apart when it's squished in a ball. This tells me that while there is aromatic casing, a lot of the flavor comes from heavily steamed and pressed Burley. If you pack this tightly, you'll be punished with frequent re-lightings. Packed loosely, Black Swan burns particularly well for a pure Cavendish mixture. Definitely leave the broken flake and don't try to rub this out, as the variety of cuts makes this much more complex and interesting than your average ribbon-cut Cavendish. It's lus-

cious and smoky with potent black Cavendish flavor. In smoking, there is a dense, intense Latakia-like roasting meat character with red wine, currant and butter sauce. While I can honestly say this mixture smokes well in both meerschaum and briar, it really does perform best in a briar. It leaves minimal residual flavor, but I would still recommend smoking this in a briar dedicated to lightly cased Virginias or aromatic blends. The rough cut was particularly appealing in a slightly larger bowl, delivering a level of complexity I've seldom experienced with a straight black Cavendish tobacco. This is an exceptional Cavendish that threatens to turn even a Cavendish hater into a Cavendish lover. If you're a nicotine wimp like me, this is a fine way to enjoy the more intense flavors of rich, dark tobacco with much less of the nicotine punch as you find in Virginia-based blends like Synjeco's Bad Nun 2 or G.L. Pease's Jacknife Plug.

HARB: This is a Black Cavendish blend processed by fire curing and steam sweating to make the smoke mild and smooth. It has a sweet topping to give the blend a good aroma and pleasant flavor. Although the cut is coarse, Black Swan was easy to load in a variety of bowl sizes. Once stoked to embers, the smoke was sweet, flavorful and smooth. The smoke leaves a nice room aroma that may tend to linger. The tobacco, although moist, burned smoothly and evenly and was pretty much the same throughout the bowl.

Golden Age

GAGE: This riot of tobacco color features black Cavendish, Perique and plenty of bright yellow flue-cured Virginia, as well as some aged red Virginia and Burley. But Perique is what this blend is all about. Presented as a selection comparable to Dunhill's Elizabethan, I'd say that it does profile Elizabethan in character, although it's a distinctly different blend to my palate. That said, it's quite interesting. While the dark Perique isn't particularly apparent in this dappled tan and blond mixture, its red wine and balsamic vinegar aroma is quite apparent the moment you open the tin. This

relatively fine ribbon cut lights quickly and debuts with a pretty serious peppery kick, but it settles down quickly. It smokes clean and dry and really delivers in a meerschaum, where the earthy undertones come through.

This is a real tour de force for those who want a tobacco that delivers loads of Perique flavor. I love Perique—as in, I will smoke good Perique straight and really enjoy it. The flavor of fine Perique walks that line between molasses, balsamic vinegar, gourmet peppercorns and oil drained from a 1962 Ford F-150 pickup that was rode hard and put up wet. While this may seem strange, it's no different than attributing the slight aroma of old socks to well-aged cheese or a classic Bordeaux wine.

What I really liked about Golden Age is its use of copious amounts of Perique. So, if you like more than a subtle dose of fine Perique in a Va-Per blend, this is a must-try. I found it smoked clean and dry. The other tobaccos in the mixture sang a short, complementary aria and departed off-stage. I couldn't tell you the percentage of Perique this mixture contains, but I'm guessing it's more than the usual 2 percent in most Va-Per blends. This is a Perique lover's dream tobacco—possibly the sleeper in the entire Sutliff line.

HARB: The label describes the contents of Golden Age as darkened tobaccos with Perique. In the tin, the aroma has a sweet nuttiness with an underlying smokiness. The Perique adds higher sour/tart notes, and it is this character that comes through the smoke at first light. Golden Age is a well-balanced combination of tobaccos chosen for their high and low flavor elements, and as I progressed through the bowl, there was a nice sweetness that bound all the elements together. The Burley and Perique contents give the blend a medium level of body, but some may find the level more than medium. Golden Age is a cool-burning blend that is flavorful and pleasant, and it showed no tendency to overheat or bite.

Blue Danube

GAGE: Golden Cavendish, Burley and aged Virginia are combined into a uniform brown mixture of very short-

cut ribbon with a tin aroma of vanilla, nuts and molasses. While definitely aromatic, the topping doesn't overwhelm some pleasant Virginia aroma. This is also true in the smoking, which delivers a buttery flavor from the golden Cavendish and some sugary richness from well-aged Virginia leaf. The room aroma is exceptionally neutral, so it's probably not a tobacco that will engender dirty looks from smoke police either inside or outside. It burns smooth and gurgle-free, which is always a plus with an aromatic. Unlike many aromatics, it doesn't turn bitter as it's being smoked, and there is no resonance of glycerin-casing bitterness. An added bonus—it delivers a nice aftertaste of sugar cookies.

HARB: The tin aroma of this blend is sweet chocolate with a hint of hazelnut. The smoke is smooth and flavorful, with not as much of the topping coming through the smoke as it did in the aroma. The light touch of Perique and the Burley give Blue Danube a moderate to medium body, and I detected a tartness and underlying bitterness that I attribute to those two tobacco types. The overall intensity of flavor grew down the bowl. Blue Danube is a cool and clean-burning blend that left a dry dottle. The aroma is pleasant, and the sweet flavors make this a nice aromatic blend that would be attractive to those around the smoker.

French Quarter

GAGE: Chunky crumble-cut Burley, mixed with flakes of Burley and aged red and orange Virginia leaf, creates a super-interesting textural mixture. I found it quite dry in the tin, requiring no drying time at all. It does have a hint of topping—but so light that the tin aroma presented less of any phony flavorings than it did damp earth and cocoa powder. Input from my room aroma "peanut gallery" concluded that the smoke aroma was "delicious," smelling like crème brûlée or caramel. That appealing, dessertlike, damp-earth character carries through in the flavor—very much like a white Burley cube, yet with an appropriate amount of sweetness lent by the aged Virginias. I found this an interesting, relatively intriguing mixture, particularly for



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real fans of straight Burley blends who might appreciate the interest and citrusy sweetness from the Virginia leaf. In the final assessment, it's very much a Burley mixture. If you like straight Burley, this offers complexity and interest. If you don't like Burley, steer clear.

HARB: The name conjures up a variety of aromas and tastes, but the description of "absolutely different" is also apropos for the city in which the French Quarter is known. Expecting, perhaps, the aromas of coffee or pralines when I opened the tin, the aroma that wafted up was instead lightly sweet with a hint of chocolate. The cut of the tobacco is absolutely different, with large and medium-sized chunks of light tan tobacco. After rubbing out the larger pieces, I loaded a pipe and stoked the blend to embers. I was rewarded with a nutty flavor and very smooth, cool, dry smoke that had a moderate kick from the Burley. French Quarter is an interesting blend that deserves a try just because it is so different.

Academy

GAGE: This mixture visibly offers some Latakia but also a significant amount of black Cavendish, flecked with a fairly neutral dose of Virginia and possibly Burley. The tin aroma carries hints of honey and butter, but it is generally very mild. The Latakia adds a little smokiness and the quality of the Cavendish makes this mixture work. The Cavendish delivers all of the aromatic flavoring. It definitely skews to the aromatic side of the scale, and unlike Altadis' description of this as an English blend, I wouldn't characterize this as an English blend despite the Latakia and uncased Virginia. If there are any Orientals in this blend, I was hard pressed to find them. It's a modestly appealing and very smooth mixture, smoking clean and evenly to the end, without goop. I appreciated the restraint in the use of toppings, which in many aromatic/Latakia blends tend to clash with the Latakia, making for a blend that tastes of mud. If you like the concept of an aromatic blend with Latakia but have found the aromatic casing in some of these mixtures to be overwhelming, Academy is definitely worth a try.

HARB: Academy is a Burley-based blend with aromatic black Cavendish and Latakia. The aroma is sweet with a hint of caramelized pears. The Latakia aroma was not apparent to me until the ribbons of tobacco had aired enough to dissipate some of the topping. Once loaded into a pipe and stoked to embers, it was the nutty Burley and the light topping that carried this blend. The amount of Latakia used was proportioned with a very delicate touch that added to the depth of flavor without highlighting the smoky and pungent character for which it is known. I found that the blend could easily be nudged to overheat if I puffed too hard trying to find the Latakia. I think it would be better to just enjoy the Burley and Cavendish elements, and if you get a hint of Latakia, settle for that.

Man's Best Friend

GAGE: This is a colorful blend of rough, short-cut pieces of bright yellow flue-cured Virginia, Latakia and finely cut cubed Burley, with a delicately Balkan tin aroma. While classified by Altadis as nonaromatic, it does feature a light rum topping. Once again, this is an inexcusable misstep in description on Altadis' part. However, the aromatic topping is barely noticeable, either in flavor or in the fiery bite that can result from the burning sugars from the bright Virginias or rum topping. In fact, this blend is remarkably mellow and bite-free for a tobacco featuring such a significant amount of bright Virginia leaf. The rum flavoring really seems designed more to create an appealing room aroma, which it does, rather than add much flavor. Altadis particularly recommends this mixture for fans of Barking Dog. I would say that while the flavors are consistent, it's far superior to Barking Dog. The base tobaccos are truly excellent and offer a relatively rare opportunity to enjoy a healthy dose of bright Virginia without the typical tongue burn. In fact, I stoked this mixture to pretty high levels and even with fairly vigorous puffing and a walk on a windy day, it refused to smoke hot.

HARB: This blend is described on the label only as a mixture that never bites. Man's Best Friend is a Burley/Virginia-

based blend that is lightly flavored with rum. The casing complements and helps to meld all the other components, softens and sweetens the smoke, and gives the blend smoothness. The blend also includes a touch of Latakia, which gives smokiness to the Burley. By mid-bowl, most of the rum flavoring had burned off, so the zesty character of the Virginia became more noticeable. As described, there was no bite with this blend, and it remained smooth and soft throughout the bowl.

Alexander Bridge

GAGE: This mixture features lightly cased Virginias and Burley in a medium ribbon cut punctuated by some rather large bits of leaf. I have to think this combination of ribbon-cut and torn leaf is no accident, and it does contribute to more complexity and flavor interplay than you usually find in aromatic blends. The tin aroma hints at vanilla and honey, but the topping doesn't mask the lush Virginia aroma. Alexander Bridge is aromatic, but like many of the Sutliff blends, the aromatic character is very subdued. The blend was, to me, perfectly moisturized straight from the tin. I couldn't identify the aromatic flavoring used, and Altadis gives no hint to the topping in its over-romanticized description. Not a choice for lovers of uncased English tobaccos, it is a welcome relief to any aromatic tobacco fan who is searching for something without the grotesque over-flavoring of bulk blends.

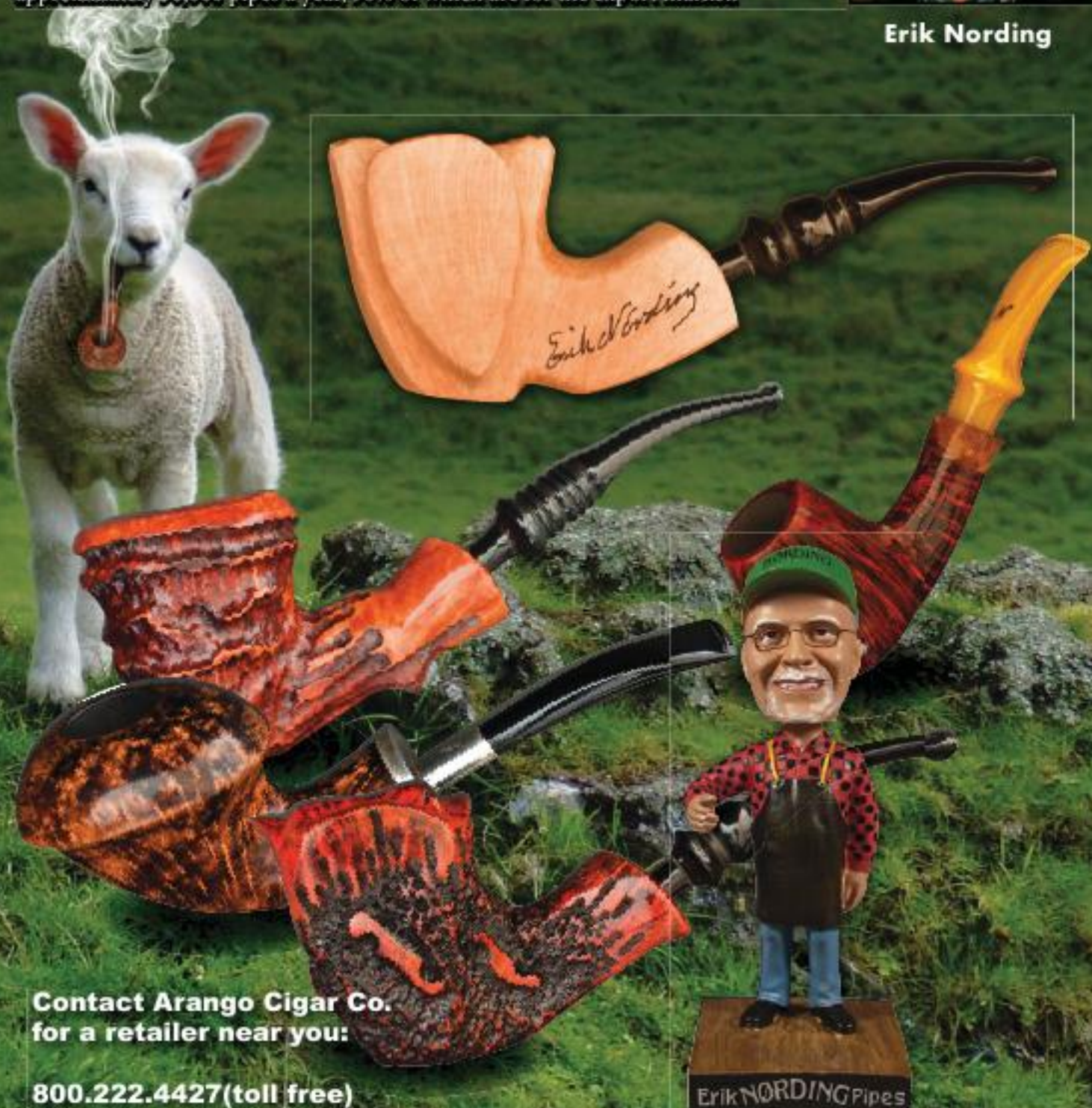
HARB: This is a Virginia/Burley blend with a light aromatic topping that gives the tobaccos a sweet caramel/chocolate aroma. The tobaccos are cut into thin ribbons that are a mix of long and short strands. With this cut, the blend was easy to pack, to light and to keep lit. Once stoked past the charring light, the light topping began to dissipate, allowing the flavors of the tobaccos to emerge, with the sweetness becoming a combination from the topping and the Virginia in the blend. The components in Alexander Bridge are well balanced to produce a medium level of taste with complexity, and a light to medium level of body. This blend deserves a place on your to-try list. P&T

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The Chicagoland International Pipe & Tobacciana Show will be held May 5-6, 2013, at the Pheasant Run Resort, 4051 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL 60174. Reservation telephone numbers are 800.999.3319 or 630.584.6300. Mention the show and receive a special room rate. For more information, contact Craig Cobine at porshcigar@aol.com or visit the show's website at www.chicagopipeshow.com.

CORPS Pipe Show

The 28th annual Conclave of Richmond Pipe Smokers Pipe & Cigar Smokers Exposition will be held Oct. 5-7, 2012, at the Greater Richmond Convention Center at 403 N. Third St., Richmond, VA 23219. Show hours will be Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visit the CORPS website at www.corpsmokers.org for more information and direct links to exhibitor table reservations, hotel room reservations, member information and expo updates. Smoking will be allowed at the show. For parking instructions, visit www.richmondcenter.com/parking-directions.html.

Greater Kansas City Pipe & Tobacco Show

The 2012 Greater Kansas City Pipe & Tobacco show will be held June 23-24 at the Doubletree Hotel, 10100 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210. Call the hotel at 913.451.6100 and ask for the Greater KC Pipe Club room block to receive a reservation of \$89 per night. People planning on attending are encouraged to reserve their rooms early because a major convention in Kansas City will also be held that weekend. The show will feature American pipemakers and the third annual Carver's Contest. For more information, visit the Kansas City Pipe Club's website at www.gkcpipeclub.com or contact Quinton Wells at 913.383.2650, email: quinton@gkcpipeclub.com; or club president John Cermak at 913.661.2613, email: jpcermak@kc.rr.com.

NASPC Show

The annual North American Society of Pipe Collectors Show will be held on Saturday, Aug. 25, 2012, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 600 Metro Place North, Dublin, OH 43017. Phone the hotel at 866.372.5566 and mention the NASPC Show to receive a special room rate. For show information, contact Bill Unger at NASPC, P.O. Box 9642, Columbus, OH 43209; phone: 614.436.3751; email: bill@naspc.org.

West Coast Pipe Show

The third annual West Coast Pipe Show will be held Nov. 3-4, 2012, at the Palace Station Hotel & Casino. Smoking will be allowed in the entire show area, including in the new smoking lounge incorporated into the ballroom. There will also be a Friday night poker tournament hosted by the show committee. For West Coast Pipe Show room rates, contact the Palace Station Hotel & Casino at 800.634.3101; website: www.palacestation.com. For table reservations and other information, contact Steve O'Neill at 956 East 800 South, Lewiston, UT 84320; phone: 435.258.5431; email: steve@westcoastpipeshow.com; website: www.westcoastpipeshow.com.

AD INDEX

4noggins.com	15	Music City Marketing	8
Arango Cigar Co.	53	Park Lane	14
Bisgaard Pipes	15	Pulvers Briar	15
Cigar & Tabac Ltd.	14	Quality Briar	14
Cup O'Joes	CVR4	Savinelli	3
De La Concha	43	Smokingpipes.com	5
East-West Trading Co.	7	SpecComm Int'l	37, 49, 54
Fader's	14	Stemco-Pimo	51
James Norman Limited	CVR2-1	The Briar & The Burley	14
Just for Him	15	The Briary Pipe & Tobacco Co.	15
Lane Limited	CVR3		



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